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ABSTRACT

The Status of Women section of the Proceedings contains the following 8 papers: "Coverage of Mars Exploration: Media Messages about Women Scientists" (Karon R. Speckman and Lois A. Bichler); "The Case of President Clinton and the Feminists: Discourses of Feminism in the News" (Dustin Harp); "Liberal Feminist Theory and Women's Images in Mass Media: Cycles of Favor and Furor" (Sandra L. Ginsburg); "Reporting the Birth and Death of Feminism: Three Decades of Mixed Messages in 'Time' Magazine" (Carolyn Kitch); "The Women's Suffrage Movement through the Eyes of 'Life' Magazine Cartoons" (J. Robyn Goodman); "Displaced Persons: Race, Sex and New Discourses of Orientalism in the U.S. Mass Media" (Meenakshi Gigi Durham); "Gender and Cultural Hegemony in Reality-Based Television Programming: The World According to 'A Wedding Story'" (Erika Engstrom); and "Portrayal of Women Using Computers in Television Commercials: A Content Analysis" (Candace White, Katherine N. Kinnick, and Kadesha Washington). (RS)

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Coverage of Mars exploration: Media messages about women scientists

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Abstract

Coverage of Mars exploration: Media messages about women scientists

This study examines coverage of the Mars exploration in 1997 to determine what view about women and science media users gained. Media coded included ABC, NBC, CNN, Associated Press, the *New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. The study used content analysis to determine whether media used the woman in charge of the Mars project as a main source, source choice by gender of report/anchor, and how sources were described.

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Coverage of Mars exploration: Media messages about women scientists

The world watched on July 4, 1997, as NASA's Pathfinder spacecraft landed on Mars -- the first Mars landing since Viking One and Viking Two in 1976. A six-wheeled mobile robot or rover, Sojourner, explored the planet and sent pictures back to earth. The landing and photos interested people because scientists speculated that Mars once had life. Media users learned much about space exploration and the scientists' enthusiasm over a successful project. However, did media users learn that the manager of the Mars Exploration Program and designer of Pathfinder was a woman? Did they learn that the rover vehicle, Sojourner, was named after Sojourner Truth, an African-American civil war abolitionist? Did media users learn that science is a viable career option for both women and men? This study examined the world view that media users would gain about women scientists by studying news coverage of the Mars Pathfinder mission to determine whether print and television used the woman in charge of the Mars project as a source, how female sources were described, and whether the origin of the robot's name was explained.

Significance of topic

Because society continues to advance technologically, society may have an interest in increasing women and minorities in science careers. The United States needs more qualified workers and scientists to continue competing in the global marketplace (Terry, 1997). Female enrollments are rising in undergraduate science programs in the United States, yet many of these women do not go on to graduate school or a science career. Why this disparity continues is a complicated society problem. "Women in science confront a complex web of competing and contradictory realities and discourses

as they negotiate their career identities" (Erwin & Maurutto, 1998, p. 51). Experts suggest a variety of reasons for women abandoning science careers such as lack of mentors and lack of support in school or from families (see Literature Review section). However, if we accept that media are agencies of socialization and could shape societal attitudes about gender roles, then studying media coverage of women's role in the Mars landing is significant because it aids in understanding what view about women and science media users will gain. Media coverage that accurately portrays women's contributions to the field of science without stereotypes could relay successful messages that women are capable of achieving in science, especially space exploration. Media have covered the increase of women astronauts, but the Mars exploration coverage focused more on the scientists behind the scenes because the main characters were machines as opposed to people.

Media outlets examined were CNN, ABC, NBC, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, and *Associated Press* wire stories for two weeks before and two weeks after the landing. Specifically, the study examined whether Donna Shirley was used as a main source, whether gender of the reporter/anchor affected source choice, how female and male sources were described, and whether media users would have gained information on the naming of Sojourner. Although coverage extended four weeks, the television stories were heavily concentrated in a two-week period.

In this paper's first section, the literature on women and science, agenda-setting, framing, and use of sources is examined. The following section focuses on the research questions and description of the method. Results, discussion, and conclusions follow.

Literature review

Women in science

Although some occupations have achieved gender equity, engineering and science occupations have not. Or if women do enter science fields, they often do not remain in what is called the "science pipeline" (Hanson, 1996). The pipeline is a metaphor used to describe how women choose certain careers and advance in those careers. Enrollment in math courses is considered essential to the start of the pipeline. Ages at which the science disparity begins differ depending on study. Hanson concluded that in eighth grade, the United States has female enrollments of 51.2 % of students in math classes; however, this changes by twelfth grade to 43.8% (1996).[1] Another study concluded that at age nine, both sexes have similar mathematics and science proficiencies, but the gap appears at age 13 (*Women in Mathematics and Science*, 1997). An earlier study showed that by tenth grade, the gap widens with only 10% of girls interested in the natural sciences compared with 25% of boys (*Women and K-12 Science and Mathematics Education*, 1994). By high school graduation, 5% of girls indicate that they want a potential career in science while 20% of boys indicate the same interest (*Women and K-12 Science and Mathematics Education*). A 1996 study showed that 20% of men and 4% of women planned to major in computer sciences or engineering (*Women in Mathematics and Science*).

The most recent AAUW study showed that the gap in math and science achievement is narrowing at present, but girls now lag far behind boys in technology (AAUW(A) & AAUW(B), 1998). Also, boys are more likely than girls to take the three core science courses – biology, chemistry, and physics – with physics having the largest gap. Of the students who took the 1997 SAT exam, 15% of the boys intended to major in engineering, with only 4% of girls intending that major (Anderson, 1998).

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[1] Hanson's article analyzed cross-national data of seven countries, but only the figures from the United States are considered in this study.

What makes young girls, female teenagers, and finally college women continue in science? Reports from a government hearing suggest that girls often do not see science as a viable option because of stereotypes and attitudes of teachers, parents, and peers (*Women and K-12 Science and Mathematics Education*). Of those females who do continue and do plan to major in engineering, 1/3 do not complete that course of study. They rarely leave because of bad grades but are "drawn away by another force, such as peer pressure or interest in another major" (*Women and K-12 Science and Mathematics Education*, p. 8). The women who persist do so because of "advising, encouragement, and mentoring ... supportive faculty environment, career advising support, and parental encouragement during the undergraduate years" (Rayman & Brett, 1995, p. 390). Although women have achieved parity in the bio-sciences at the bachelor's level, they have not in natural science fields, earning 33% of natural science and engineering bachelor's degrees, 27% of the master's and 22% of the doctorates (*Women and K-12 Science and Mathematics Education*).

The pipeline continues to dry up as these female scientists enter their careers. Except for starting salaries in engineering, the disparity continues. Women earn less, have difficulty in achieving tenure, and hit the "glass ceiling" in science careers (Rosser, 1995; *Women and K-12 Science and Mathematics Education*). At the doctoral level, there is little progress toward parity (Barber, 1995).

Estimates vary on how many scientists are women. Labor markets in the United States for female scientists show that 22.7% employed scientists are women and 4.1% employed engineers are female (Hanson). A 1992 National Science Foundation report showed that only 16% of all employed scientists and engineers were women (Rosser). In 1993, 18% were women *(Women in Mathematics and Science)*. A 1994 report from the National Research Council concluded that women make up only 12% of the employed scientific and engineering labor force in industry (Rosser). Women enter more life science and social science careers than engineering.

None of these figures, however, explains why the lack of women in the science pipeline continues. Feminist theories suggest pedagogical, curricular, and research improvements are necessary to change the science pipeline (Rosser). Women's success in science depends on assimilation and accepting the prevailing male culture of science, and thus, the culture of science must be changed to keep women in the science pipeline (Barber, 1995).

Media effects

Three classes of media effects on the development of public opinion are recognized -- agenda setting, priming, and framing (Iyengar & Simon, 1997). Agenda setting and framing may be applicable in this study. Source selection may be considered part of framing.

Agenda-setting is the gate-keeping that tells people "in fairly uniform fashion which individual issues and activities are most significant and deserve to be ranked highly on the public's agenda of concerns" (Graber, 1993, p. 216). Although researchers use agenda-setting usually with issues, the theory may be applicable to how people view the potential for women to become scientists. Brewer and McCombs outlined two models of agenda-setting: the linear model where influence moves from the media to the public and then policy and the independent model consisting of moving from the media agenda to the policy agenda (1996). Atwater et al. studied whether the agenda-setting model operated at the subissue – beyond basic topics or issues – level and found a moderate relationship (Atwater, et al., 1985). They suggested that audiences can gain more detailed levels of information on issues than just major topics.

Most framing research has been applied to how framing of news issues affects the public's opinion of that issue or political issues. However, framing could be applied to any issue on which the public has an opinion, including environmental and scientific ones. "Most of what most people know about anything beyond their work and family horizons is derived from press, radio and television" (Radford, 1996). Framing consists

of selection and salience (Entman, 1993). "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text ... to highlight some bits of information about an item ... elevating them in salience ... making more noticeable, meaningful or memorable to audiences." (Entman, p. 52). Entman concluded that omissions of definitions, evaluations, and recommendations are as critical in giving the audience clues as inclusions. According to Shah, Domke, and Wackman, framing "focuses on the manner in which the construction of communication texts influences individual cognitions by selectively focusing on particular parts of reality while ignoring or downplaying other aspects" (1996, p. 509+). Thus, the omission of women scientists in newscasts could give the viewers the hidden message that science is not a viable profession for women.

Framing research has also been done, though not as extensively, on scientific topics. According to Nelkin, the media's portrayal of scientific topics influences public opinion of those topics (1996).

Source selection

Source selection could affect the world view of female scientists. Even though the number of women are increasing in professional and technical jobs, they are rarely used as news sources (Liebler & Smith, 1997). The Mars story was an official news story and source choice would have been limited. In routine channel news (official news created by organizations that provide built-in news sources) journalists will rely on officials rather than seek out their own sources as they would with conflict-related news (Berkowitz & Beach, 1993). Powers and Fico concluded that reporters choose officials for story sources based on personal judgments and pressures from within the newsroom (1994). This conclusion could be applied to television reporters also because often they do not have the time to seek out alternative sources and choose official sources for convenience.

Liebler and Bendix conclude that "source usage, visuals, and reporter wrap-ups all contribute to the overall framing impact of a news story" (1996, p. 61). Thus, who is chosen -- or not chosen -- as a source could contribute to a message about women and science.

Analyzing television coverage of issues is helpful to understand how viewers may develop a view that women cannot be scientists. Gerbner's cultivation theory concluded that television has a unique role as the medium that tells most of the stories that create messages of the real world in people's minds (Gerbner et al, 1980).

Research questions and method

Research questions for this study were:

1) Was Donna Shirley, the manager of the Mars Exploration Program, used as a main source?

2) Did the gender of the reporter/anchor affect source choice?

3) Of total stories analyzed with specific themes, how many included Shirley?

4) When female sources were used, were they portrayed in terms of "traditional" female values and emotions? How were male sources portrayed? Were sources identified according to gender?

5) Would viewers and readers learn how Sojourner got its name?

All Mars exploration stories from NBC, ABC, CNN, *Associated Press*, the *New York Times*, and the *Los Angeles Times* were analyzed for a month -- two weeks before and two weeks after July 4. Transcripts were used from Lexis-Nexis©. CBS was not analyzed because scripts were not available on Lexis-Nexis©. The broadcast outlets covered two commercial television and one cable news network. The *Los Angeles Times* was used because the Jet Propulsion Lab, responsible for the design of the Pathfinder, is located in the greater Los Angeles area. AP stories were used because these are the basis

for most national stories in smaller newspapers, and the *New York Times* was used because it is often considered an agenda-setting source for many media outlets.

The unit of analysis was the news story. Information coded for each story included: (1) female science reporter or regular reporter or anchor, male science reporter or regular reporter or anchor; (2) source by name listed in order of referral or used as a source for the first five sources. The definition of source was any person who appeared in the story, provided an interview or sound bite, and was identified (list of 22 sources was generated by a preliminary reading of articles and scripts); (3) origin of source -- interview by reporter, press conference, or couldn't tell (many broadcast stories were summaries and included no sources); (4) how source identified -- title only, title plus gender such as "woman engineer," title plus additional gender comments such as "first woman"; (5) general theme or subject of article or broadcast (list of themes was generated by preliminary reading of articles and scripts); and (6) inclusion of information about naming of Sojourner.

Not all the information coded was used in the statistical analysis. Origin of source -- whether by interview or press conference -- was not analyzed because it was too difficult to determine origin from scripts or stories. Although nine themes were used in the coding of all stories, the only stories used in the analysis were: story focusing on the Mars mission, story on facts about Mars, story specifically on one scientist, story on women and their contribution to space, and story on naming of Sojourner. Stories that covered other areas such as Mars candy bar and Mattel's Hot Wheels version of Mars Rover were coded but not used in the statistical analysis because those stories did not focus on the exploration.

A team of two persons coded the stories. Coder inter-reliability was 87%. The SAS package was used to perform all statistical analyses.

Results and discussion

We coded 362 stories. For research questions that focused on source usage, only the stories with at least one source were analyzed. Percentages or simply numbers are reported because the researchers used the entire population of stories; hence, statistical inference such as X^2 tests was not necessary.

Research question one: Was Donna Shirley used as a main source?

Stories were coded for the first five sources used. Many of the broadcast stories, and some of the print ones, did not use a source. Although they were coded, they were not analyzed. Thus, numbers given in Table 1 show only stories that used at least one source. When Shirley was not used as one of the first five sources, a male source was used. CNN clearly had the highest percentage of stories using Shirley as a source with 29% of its stories using her at least as one source. Next was 16% for the *Los Angeles Times*, 14% for NBC, 9% for AP, 5% for the *New York Times*, and 4% for ABC. When all outlets are combined, 17% of the stories with one source used Shirley and 11% of the stories used her as the first source. (Table 1)

Table 1: Use of Shirley as source

Number of stories using at least one source	**Used Shirley**
NBC -- 28 stores	4 (2 in no. 1 slot; 2 in no. 2) **14%**
ABC -- 23 stories	1 (no. 1 slot) **4%**
CNN -- 82 stories	24 (16 in no.1; 7 in no.2; 1 in no.4) **29%**
NYTimes -- 21 stories	1(no. 1 slot) **5%**
LATimes -- 25 stories	4 (3 no. 1 slot, 1 in no. 2) **16%**
AP -- 56 stories	5 (2 no. 1 slot, 3 in no. 2&3 **9%**
Total stories with one source using Shirley	**39 or 17% as a source** **25 or 11% as the first source**

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The Mars exploration story could be categorized as routine channel news as described in the literature review. Those stories usually focus on officially "supplied" sources. What cannot be told from the data is whether NASA officials did or did not make Shirley available as a source. Clearly, CNN succeeded in using Shirley as a source in 29% of its stories and as the first source in 19% of its stories, which was higher than any of the other outlets. However, CNN's coverage was much more extensive in general than the other broadcast outlets because it is an all-news station. Thus, CNN's reporters may have avoided official sources and sought out Shirley while the other outlets had less choices because of time constraints. The *Los Angeles Times* only used Shirley as a source 16% of the time even though this was a local story because the Jet Propulsion Laboratory is in the Los Angeles area.

Research question 2: Did the gender of the reporter/anchor affect source choice?

Reporter gender did not appear to influence news source gender in the Mars coverage. Out of the 44 print stories coded for source choice written by male writers, 39 or 89% did not use Shirley as a source. Of the 31 print stories written by female writers, 23 or 74% did not use Shirley as a source. (Table 2a)

Broadcast was more difficult to analyze because the person on camera may not be the person responsible for the writing of the story. Of the 93 stories coded for male broadcast reporters or all-male broadcast teams, 75 stories or 81% did not use Shirley. Of the 21 stories coded for female broadcast reporters or all-female broadcast teams, 16 stories or 76% did not use Shirley. (Table 2b)

Table 2a: Print media combined-- gender of reporter/anchor and not using Shirley as a source (if no author was given or gender unknown, story was not counted)

	Percentage of stories Did not use Shirley
Female science writer or female reporter 31 stories	26 stories or 84%
Male science writer or male reporter 42 stories	39 stories or 93%

Table 2b: Broadcast media combined-- gender of reporter/anchor and not using Shirley as source (combinations of gender on camera not given)

	Percentage of stories Did not use Shirley
Female reporters or anchors 21 stories	16 stories or 76%
Male reporters or anchors 93 stories	75 stories or 81%

These results show that in the Mars coverage, reporter gender did not matter significantly in using Shirley as a source. Because this story was a routine channel news story, many reporters may not have been aware of who headed the project and thus reporter gender had no influence on source choice.

Research question 3: Of total stories analyzed with specific themes, how many included Shirley?

Of the 11 original themes coded, stories using only four themes were analyzed for this question. Stories focusing on naming of Sojourner were collapsed with stories focusing on the Mars mission because the Sojourner topic was only discussed as part of a larger story. Other themes analyzed were focusing on facts about Mars, focusing specifically on one scientist, and focusing on women and their contribution to space. These stories then were analyzed whether they included Shirley.

The them of focusing on one scientist is especially interesting. NBC ran 13 stories on that theme; however, only 2 of them focused on Shirley. (Table 3a) ABC ran 4 stories on that theme with 1 focusing on Shirley. AP ran two stories about specific scientists -- one on Shirley and one not, and the *Los Angeles Times* ran 1 out of 3 articles on specific scientists on Shirley. (Table 3b)

Table 3a. Broadcast media
Number of stories, depending on theme, that used Shirley

	NBC		ABC		CNN	
Story's main subject	Used Shirley	Did not use Shirley	Used Shirley	Did not use Shirley	Used Shirley	Did not use Shirley
Mars mission	0	3	0	7	24	69
Facts about Mars	2	12	0	14	0	1
Women's contribution to space	0	1	0	0	0	0
One scientist	2	11	1	3	0	0

Table 3b. Print media
Number of stories, depending on theme, that used Shirley

	NYTimes		LATimes		AP	
Story's main subject	Used Shirley	Did not use Shirley	Used Shirley	Did not use Shirley	Used Shirley	Did not use Shirley
Mars mission	0	6	2	21	2	18
Facts about Mars	1	10	1	1	1	28
Women's contribution to space	0	1	0	0	0	0
One scientist	0	0	1	2	1	1

Percentages for all the media with all four theme categories combined, ranged from 86% to 96% not using Shirley, showing that focusing on the head of the Mars mission was not a priority for print or broadcast media. Few stories focusing on one scientist covered women's contribution to space – a lost opportunity to inform the public about the role of women scientists in space exploration.

Research question 4) When female sources were used, were they portrayed in terms of "traditional" female values and emotions? How were male sources portrayed? Were sources identified according to gender?

When sources were used, they were coded for identification -- title only, title plus gender (such as woman scientist), title plus additional gender comment (e.g. "one of the first), or no identification. Only a few stories identified sources but how those stories treated the sources is more significant than the numbers.

When the words used in the Mars stories were examined, results showed mixed messages about women scientists. Shirley was treated differently than the male sources because reporters emphasized her status as a divorced mother and woman. Men were not described by marital status. The NBC story that used a woman with a gender comment said that Donna Shirley was a divorced mother and the only woman in her college engineering class.

A negative message was an emphasis on tears, with crying often viewed as a female trait. In a *Los Angeles Times* July 4 article, Shirley is quoted as bringing "tears to her eyes" in explaining how one engineer's wife had died and in her memory, he had written the name of their son into Sojourner's belly (K.C. Cole, *Los Angeles Times*, July 4, 1997). That same author, a science writer, said in a July 5 article that "Goldin walked around the flight control center giving out hugs and congratulations like cigars. Mars program director Donna Shirley wiped tears from her eyes" (K.C. Cole, *Los Angeles Times*, July 5, 1997). Goldin was the head of NASA.

One story that gave a mixed message was a *Los Angeles Times* article written by a female writer that focused only on Shirley. The story discussed about how Shirley had always wanted to go to Mars, but had realized she would have trouble being an astronaut because "you had to be a fighter pilot, have great eyesight, perfect health and be male" (Hall, *Los Angeles Times*, July 5, 1997). The remainder of the article tells how everyone was congratulating her at the JPL. "She was the woman of the hour. People wanted her

picture, her handshake, even her autograph -- and these weren't tourists, these were the men and women who had worked on the project with her or the people who worked on other projects and were watching colleagues enjoy success." Later in the article, the author describes what Shirley was wearing -- "tailored red suit jacket ('Mars red') she had donned for a day of talking into television cameras." No male sources were described by their attire.

That same July 5 *Los Angeles Times* article uses Lin Van Nieuwstadt, female designer of the radios on the rover, as a source. "I am so nervous," Nieuwstadt confided to Shirley. "I feel so sick." This can be interpreted as a negative comment about women scientists. However, we do not know whether any of the male scientists made the same comment, but none was quoted as such.

A July 6 *Los Angeles Times* article focused on Jennifer Harris, flight director (K.C. Cole, *Los Angeles Times*, July 6, 1997). The article details how she graduated from MIT with a degree in aerospace engineering in 1990 and was a teacher in Ukraine before working on the Pathfinder. The tone of the article is very positive, yet an attribution is "the woman from Fostoria, Ohio, who dominated America's TV screens during Pathfinder's tense Independence Day Landing." The story ends with:

> As for being the only female on the Pathfinder flight team, she doesn't see it as an issue. "There's definitely a difference" between the way men and women relate to each other, she said. "But I don't need to be like them to do my job. They don't yell at me. I like that. Especially when things get tense."

Several stories focused on maternal feelings of Shirley. A July 1, 1997, *AP* story by a female science writer starts with the lead, "Donna Shirley feels so maternal toward Sojourner ... that she even dreams about the pint-sized spacecraft" (Allen, *AP*, July 1, 1997). Yet Shirley herself is quoted as saying "It's my baby." The article goes on to detail how her work has kept her away from home a lot and that Shirley's 20-year-old

daughter has a sibling rivalry with the vehicle. Later it discussed Shirley being a pioneer and being the only girl to take mechanical drawing and not home economics. It also reported that her University of Oklahoma adviser told her she couldn't be an engineer and she was the only woman at JPL to manage a program other than human resources.

A July 7, 1997, interview of Shirley on ABC's Good Morning America by Michael Guillen, science editor, said:

> Dr. Michael Guillen: you know, last year, when I first interviewed you, you said you're going to be a nervous mamma.
> Donna Shirley: Yes.
> Dr. Michael Guillen: This is, like, your baby.
> Donna Shirley: Yes, yes.
> Dr. Michael Guillen: Right? You have a real daughter...
> Donna Shirley: Yes.
> Dr. Michael Guillen: ...but this is your other daughter. How do you feel now? Are you a little bit relieved?

A July 11 interview of Shirley on NBC Nightly News said "she is the one behind the successful mission, in charge of the whole team. Then the reporter went on to say, "She is a divorced mother and the program manager of the Mars Mission." Shirley responded: "I'm the one that decided that the rover was going to be a she. And since the rover team is mostly men, there was some grumbling about that." Later the reporter gave background on her -- becoming a pilot at 15, the only woman in her college engineering class, and the only aerospace engineer ever crowned Miss Winnowed (her hometown in Oklahoma). But after the Mars Exploration director said that Shirley is as close as we've got to a Martian, the reporter said, "And she is also a mom. Daughter Laura stopped home from college to check out the rover's success and NASA's 3-D view of Mars." Shirley ended the interview: "It's sort of like the day my daughter was born. You know, this is something new in the world, something new in the universe."

The focus on maternal feelings and motherhood or parenthood did not carry over to the male scientists. When they were interviewed, those metaphors were not used.

CNN's coverage of Shirley focused more on facts about the success of the mission rather than personal facts about Shirley while keeping the tone of the exuberant emotions of the mission intact. For example, a July 7 story quoted Shirley as saying: "Well, it's pretty wild, it's pretty exciting," and in a July 8 story, the reporter simply asked her questions about the Pathfinder and future missions ("A look at pathfinder's mission," *CNN Newsroom/Worldview*, July 7, 1997; "Scientists are expecting more information about Mars," *CNN Today*, July 8, 1997).

A July 14, 1997, *New York Times* article focused on age of the scientists in a positive way, explaining that most of the scientists working on the Mars exploration were part of a new generation of scientists. Specifically it focused on three scientists, two of them women. (Wilford, *New York Times*, July 14, 1997). That article presented a positive role model for young women.

Research question 5: Would viewers and readers learn how Sojourner got its name?

The rover vehicle was named after Sojourner Truth, an African-American civil war abolitionist. The name was chosen by the JPL staff out of 3,000 essays from all over the world in a "name the rover contest" for children 18 and under (Shirley in *CNN Worldview with Judy Woodruff*, July 3, 1997). Entrants were to pick a heroine and say why the rover should be named after that heroine. Valerie Ambroise, 13, of Connecticut won the contest.

The *New York Times* had two out of 41 stories mention the naming -- the most of any of the media. ABC had no mentions, and all the other media had one mention. (Table 5) An opportunity was missed by not giving the explanation in more stories for several reasons. First, many people could have learned more about African-American women and their role in the abolition movement. Second, space ships often have masculine-origin names, and the naming of Sojourner was an excellent way of dispelling the belief

that space exploration only involves men. Shirley had insisted that the rover would have a female name.

Table 5: How Sojourner got its name

	Total Mars stories	Stories with Sojourner name explanation
NBC	67	1
ABC	49	0
CNN	98	1
NYTimes	41	2
LATimes	32	1
AP	80	1

Conclusions

A 1991 report concluded that adult encouragement is a requirement for girls to explore science, math, and technology, which are considered risk-taking activities (Wilson, 1993). We might also conclude that along with encouragement, a world view that women can be successful scientists is needed. Thus, when those women are covered by the media, coverage should be complete and without stereotypes.

Framing of the story involves making some parts of an issue more salient through choice of sources and how sources are described, thus shaping the view of reality. The view or message from the Mars coverage was mixed. Shirley was used as a source in only 17% of the stories with a source, yet she was the head of the project, the brains behind its success. The fact this was a routine channel or official news source probably accounted for that low number although CNN, with a more expansive news budget, did use her in 29% of its stories. Gender of the reporter also did not make much difference in inclusion of Shirley as a source. For example, in print, female reporters did not include

Shirley in 84% of their stories, and male reporters did not include Shirley in 93% of their stories. These decisions may or may not have been conscious choices. Reduced media budgets and deadlines may have made it easier to interview "official" sources such as NASA's head Peter Goldin. Research was not done on whether NASA itself was responsible for not supplying or highlighting women scientists as sources. Even the stories that focused on one scientist and used Shirley were few. For example, out of NBC's 13 stories on a single scientist, only three of those stories focused on Shirley. Again, the outlets examined may not have been aware that Shirley was the project head.

Finally, when female scientists or Shirley were covered, the messages were in conflict. On the one hand, coverage of Shirley showed that for her generation she overcame great odds -- the stereotype that "girls aren't engineers" and the challenge of being the only woman in her college engineering classroom. Those were positive messages, as was the *New York Times* article highlighting the youth of three of the scientists. Two of those highlighted were women.

Descriptions that emphasized her status as a divorced mother and her "maternal" instincts about Pathfinder and Sojourner did not send a positive message by describing woman in the reproductive role. However, many of the quotes that show maternal instincts came directly from Shirley. She felt no reticence to show that one can be a woman, a mother, and a scientist. She used the language of motherhood or parenthood to express the joy and amazement that many people the world over felt about the Mars mission. Even though many of the maternal references are direct quotes, there may have been other direct quotes or interview questions that could have been used. None of the men sources was described as a "divorced father" or quoted as using the language of parenthood.

Shirley did make it clear that the path to being an engineer and head of the program was not without its detractors. By acknowledging that truth, she may have sent a

different message to young women: You don't have to change who you are to be a top scientist – women can excel at this career without having to become like a man.

Coverage of women scientists is a topic that should continue to be researched. Merely counting numbers of sources is not adequate, but language and meaning needs to be explored to understand more deeply the media messages sent about the future of women scientists.

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The Case of President Clinton and *the* Feminists:

Discourses of Feminism in the News

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ABSTRACT

The Case of President Clinton and *the* Feminists: Discourses of Feminism in the News

Feminism is best understood as a complicated political movement, full of the complexities present in everyday life. Using textual analysis, this research examines media discourses in news texts joining constructions of feminism to President Clinton and his extra-marital relationships. The study finds mainstream newspapers and magazines present feminism in a monolithic fashion – represented by white women. The texts offer a simplistic construction that envisions women as feminist or not and presents feminists as hypocrites for supporting Clinton.

The Case of President Clinton and *the* Feminists: Discourses of Feminism in the News

> *... we all know what feminists are. They are shrill, overly aggressive, man-hating, ball-busting, selfish, hairy, extremist, deliberately unattractive women with absolutely no sense of humor who see sexism at every turn. They make men's testicles shrivel up to the size of peas, they detest the family and think all children should be deported or drowned. Feminists are relentless, unforgiving, and unwilling to bend or compromise; they are single-handedly responsible for the high divorce rate, the shortage of decent men, and the unfortunate proliferation of Birkenstocks in America.*
> *(Douglas 1994, p. 7)*

Media texts (including news forms) tend to communicate in either/or patterns, presenting differences as tensions in need of resolution rather than acceptance. These oppositional constructs – liberal/conservative, black/white, gay/straight – help to form a foundation for our understandings of the world around us, leading to dualisms in our language and promoting misunderstandings in our complex social world. Too often these binary opposites lead people to align with one side and, in turn, reject the *other*. By allowing for, presenting and engaging in contradictions, rather than designing a world of dichotomies, media texts invest in a pursuit of understanding. In other words, when the contradictions of our world are left intact within media texts, mass media helps to shape discovery and awareness. For this reason, it is vital that media texts involve contradictions as inescapable components of contemporary societies.

With these considerations in mind, this essay attempts to understand the current media discourse surrounding feminism and the construction of feminist. Rather than a binary and simplistic construction of feminism and feminist that envisions women as either feminist or not, these concepts are better understood in a less monolithic fashion which allows for contradictions. Recent feminist scholarship points to a fragmented feminism incapable of being defined in any one way. A more useful understanding of the concepts feminism and feminist allows for disagreements – in essence giving women from varying standpoints room to practice and identify with feminism. In this essay I turn to the recent mainstream news media discourse concerning President Clinton and his both alleged and confirmed extra-marital relationships. In conducting this research, I will consider the following related questions:

- Does the construction of feminist and feminism within the dominant discourse of mainstream news media present an either/or construction of feminist/non-feminist?
- If so, how are these opposites formed and what do they *look* like?
- (How) does the construction of feminist and feminism through mainstream discursive news media practices allow for contradictions or are these concepts presented as monolithic and without disagreements?
- Is feminism/feminist defined within a patriarchal framework?

Considering previous research in the field of mass communications, I expect to find the construction of feminism and feminist in mainstream news media to be one-dimensional and in opposition to women portrayed as non-feminist. Further, it seems likely that much of the feminist discourse will depict white, anti-family women. This paper will move through previous research and dialogue concerning feminism to contextualize the term. Following will be a section devoted to understanding how mass media and the concept of feminism/t have intersected and also how terms like ideology and hegemony relate to issue of news media production. After a discussion of research methods, the paper launches into

an analysis of recent discourses of feminism/t in mainstream news, and from there discusses the implications of such findings.

What is Feminism?

Gender representation remains a vital issue in contemporary culture and also a site of continued cultural negotiation. Central to gender portrayals is the notion of woman –itself a highly contested term. Gledhill (1991) explains that the "figure of woman ... has long served as a powerful and ambivalent patriarchal symbol, heavily over-determined as an expression of the male psyche" (p. 76). Along with patriarchal ideologies, the women's movement plays an integral part in shaping conceptions of woman. This feminist movement, however, like "woman" is not so easily defined. While the political movement known as feminism has existed for more than a century, its defining characteristics have continually changed and are often at the center of intense debate both within the academic and the activist communities.

In order to discuss and interrogate news media's representation of feminism, it is important to have a working definition of feminism and feminist. This task proves difficult, though, considering that there may be as many ways to define feminism as there are feminists. This reality has led to decades of lively debate, particularly since the 1970s. At the heart of the movement rests an awareness that women are as deserving of rights and opportunities, and as capable of participating in social events as men. In the introduction to her book about American mass media's treatment of women and feminism, Faludi (1991) explains that

> feminism's agenda is basic: It asks that women not be forced to 'choose' between public justice and private happiness. It asks that women be free to define themselves – instead of having their identity defined for them, time and again, by their culture and their men. (p. xxi)

This general, if simplistic, conception of feminism, however, is not embraced by all who claim the term. Among those outspoken feminists who would argue against an "anything goes" approach to the definition of feminism is bell hooks (1984) who writes that the danger in this approach is that for all practical purposes it renders feminism nearly meaningless. She writes, "What is meant by 'anything goes' is usually that any woman who wants social equality with men regardless of her political perspective (she can be a conservative right-winger or a nationalist communist) can label herself feminist" (hooks 1984, p. 23). In hooks' view feminism is ultimately a political commitment to ending sexist oppression – it is not an identity but a movement and therefore one must be active within that movement in order to qualify as a feminist. A vital point to hooks' argument centers on actively opposing a dominant patriarchal ideology permeating Western culture. For hooks, feminism is

> a struggle to eradicate the ideology of domination that permeates Western culture on various levels as well as a commitment to reorganizing society so that the self-development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion, and material desires. (p. 24)

Not only does an emphasize on feminism as a movement insert political activism into the concept, but it undermines a danger associated with understanding feminism as an identity (hooks 1984). Again, hooks' words are eloquent and appropriate:

> To emphasize that engagement with feminist struggle as political commitment we could avoid using the phrase 'I am a feminist' (a linguistic structure designed to refer to some personal aspect of identity and self-definition) and could state 'I advocate feminism.' Because there has been

> undue emphasis placed on feminism as an identity or lifestyle, people usually resort to stereotyped perspectives on feminism. Deflecting attention away from stereotypes is necessary if we are to revise our strategy and direction. I have found that saying 'I am a feminist' usually means I am plugged into preconceived notions of identity, role, or behavior. When I say 'I advocate feminism' the response is usually 'what is feminism?' A phrase like 'I advocate' does not imply the absolutism that is suggested by 'I am.' It does not engage us in the either/or dualistic thinking that is the central ideological component of all systems of domination in Western society. (hooks 1984, p. 29)

This very point of stereotypical and monolithic notions of feminism formed a center of debate in feminist theory and discourse throughout the 1980s. In a survey of feminism, Donovan (1994) explains that "spurred on by the stress on difference in postmodernist and multiculturalist theory, feminist theory has become more specific, paying more attention to the differences among women – particularly those of race, class, ethnic background, and sexuality" (p. 187). Even a cursory glance at the growing amount of feminist theory and research in various academic disciplines makes clear the variety of feminisms – liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, and feminism emphasizing race and ethnicity (Donovan 1994; Steeves 1987). Much of the discussion about feminisms has pointed to the problem of a white feminism which has dominated the movement and threatened identification with the term. In fact, one of the greatest points of contention in recent decades within feminist discourses has been centered around race. Much of this dialogue points to Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* as laying the groundwork for a contemporary feminism which ignores issues of women of color and poorer classes and focuses on middle- and upper-class white women's "problems" with patriarchy. On the subject, hooks (1984) writes that while "Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* is still

heralded as having paved the way for contemporary feminist movement – it was written as if those women most victimized by sexist oppression (black women and lower class women) did not exist" (p. 1). The results of such thinking have been detrimental to feminist movement in a number of ways, including that women who have notions different from this dominant feminist ideology, or who have been hesitant to join organizations dominated by white, middle- and upper-class women, have felt ostracized, silenced and marginalized (hooks 1984). Ultimately, hooks explains,

> Many women are reluctant to advocate feminism because they are uncertain of the term. Other women from exploited and oppressed ethnic groups dismiss the term because they do not wish to be perceived as supporting a racist movement; feminism is often equated with white women's rights effort. (p. 23)

Because much of the dominant feminist discourse (originating primarily from white, middle- and upper-class women) points to family as a central point for gender oppression, a successful feminist movement has been imagined as one which starts with or leads to the abolition of family. As hooks (1993) notes, this has been a particularly threatening notion for non-white women who have often felt that family is the safe place away from much of life's oppressive forces. According to hooks, this "devaluation of family life in feminist discussion often reflects the class nature of the movement" (p. 37). This notion that feminism's goal is the demise of the family is important for reasons beyond issues of race as it portrays feminism and feminist movement as anti-family rather than against sexist oppression within family structures. Fiske (1996) is among those scholars to note how feminism is portrayed in opposition to family. He argues that contemporary attacks on Hillary Clinton during Bill Clinton's first run for president against George Bush were representative of attacks "on the new woman who would destroy the

traditional one (figured as Barbara Bush) and her 'natural' role in the family" (p. 29). This point is especially important when juxtaposed to media representations of Hillary Clinton in which she is identified as America's "First Feminist."

(Re)presenting Feminism

> Feminists are consistently framed as deviant sexually, a bunch of man-haters out to destroy 'family values.' In the media the opposite of 'family' often is 'feminist.' If Hillary Rodham Clinton doesn't want to bake cookies, she's anti-family and anti-housewife. Of course, this is no surprise because journalists are taught to think in terms of dichotomies, to develop their stories in terms of right versus wrong, good versus evil. The journalistic obsession with a narrow corridor in an abstract space called 'balance' continues to build this kind of false opposition. (Creedon 1993, p. 75)

In her book, *Where the Girls Are*, Susan Douglas (1994) argues that to grow up female with the mass media is to grow up confused about and disassociated with feminism and the women's movement. In the introduction to her book, she explains how mass media portrayed feminists as the women's movement gained momentum in the 1970s: "News reports and opinion columnists created a new stereotype, of fanatics, 'braless bubbleheads,' Amazons, 'the angries,' and 'a band of wild lesbians,' " (p. 7). Flanders (1997), also notes how mass media paint stereotypical images of feminism, writing that "for the last two decades, body hair and loving women were the most horrifying things about the women's rights movement" (p. 103). Along with highlighting what about feminism makes it into the news media, Flanders notes what does not. She writes, "A few foul-ups in the feminist ranks get top-billing; the mass movement that spans the globe gets zip. Shocking-sounding talk about sex gets sound bites; reasoned debate about wages and childcare is dead air" (p. 105).

Dow (1983) notes that along with images of hairy bodies and man- and family-hating lesbians, mass media audiences are exposed to another kind of feminist – the liberal feminist. But, she explains, this image does not help the political movement either. In her analysis of "Murphy Brown" (a popular situation comedy that began in 1988 and is now off the air) Dow argues that the show reveals "how popular conceptions of liberal feminism can be coopted and used as part of a rhetorical strategy to reaffirm patriarchal definitions of femininity and feminism" (p. 144). Dow believes that liberal feminism, which "assumes the erosion of barriers to women in the public sphere is the end goal of feminism," is the most common media interpretation of feminism (p. 153). She goes further to say that this form of feminism is also the easiest to incorporate into television without truly challenging patriarchal interests because it reinforces the status quo, placing responsibility for adjustment on women who enter the public sphere rather than on those who maintain this social space. She concludes that Murphy Brown and other media presentations illustrate "a variation of television's general rhetorical strategy of coopting feminist content to serve patriarchal interests, a tactic also visible in other forms of cultural discourse" (p. 153).

Little empirical data about feminist representations in the mass media exists. Ashley and Olson (1998) conducted a content analysis of the women's movement in the *New York Times*, and two news magazines, *Time* and *Newsweek,* from 1966 to 1986. The authors expected that they would find anti-feminists to be framed as more important, more legitimate and less deviant than feminists. They also anticipated that their research would show that coverage of feminists would be centered around events while coverage of anti-feminists would deal mostly with issues. In there analysis the authors found support for all four of their hypotheses. In concluding, Ashley and Olson explained that "the press delegitimized the feminists and legitimized the anti-feminists" (p. 272). They noted that the feminists were presented as disorganized, as no longer feminine because of their entrance into the masculine spheres of conflict and competition (versus cooperation), as deviant as

evidenced in their labeling (bra burners, radicals) and opposed to the labeling of anti-feminists as "pro-family" and "pro-American" (Ashley and Olson 1998).

News Norms, Ideologies and Hegemony

When considering mass media images and messages it is vital to take into account how media content operates to serve the interests of certain groups, presenting ideological notions from the perspective of the most powerful cultural enclaves. A number of critical scholars point to mass media as not only producing but reproducing and reinforcing dominant ideologies. In an essay on racism and the media, Hall (1981) explains:

> Institutions like the media are peculiarly central to the matter since they are, by definition, part of the dominant means of *ideological* production. What they 'produce' is, precisely, representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations and frames for understanding how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work. (p. 19-20)

When considering media content regarding feminism one cannot ignore the social, historical, political and cultural framework within which it is presented – namely that the mass media is located within patriarchal structures. With this in mind one can begin to understand how patriarchal notions of feminism and women are presented and re-presented in America's mass media. To understand this link between ideologies and power it is useful to turn to Gramsci's (1927/1971) theory of hegemony. Gramsci links ideology to the dominant structure in a society, explaining that ideologies are unifying forces which serve to reinforce the ruling order's dominance. This is not to suggest that there is a singular ideological representation in mass media. Hall explains that "it would be wrong and

deceptive to see the media as uniformly and conspiratorially harnessed to a single, ... conception of the world" (p. 20). The relative autonomy of media, layered meanings of texts, and the agency of audiences mean that ruling powers cannot directly supervise media messages. According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996) then,

> media institutions serve a hegemonic function by continually producing a cohesive ideology, a set of commonsensical values and norms, that serves to reproduce and legitimate the social structure through which the subordinate classes participate in their own domination. (p. 237)

Monolithic Constructions

News formation is an especially relevant concept in conjunction with notions of ideology and hegemony. Journalists often construct (and audiences often read) texts with an understanding that news is somehow "objective" and free of value judgments. Reporters have been described as holding a mirror up to the world. While the idea of an objective reality may seem ridiculous to some people, the sheer fact that this discourse about news circulate deserves consideration. Routines and norms which go into the production of news warrant examination too. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) define routines and norms as "those patterned, routinized, repeated practices and forms that media workers use to do their jobs" (p. 105). These norms come into play when journalists search for sources in their news reports. Gans (1979) explains that "if sources have provided information leading to suitable stories in the past, they are apt to be chosen again, until they eventually become regular sources" (p. 129). This restriction of voices results in a relatively monolithic perspective becoming representative of an issue. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) further explain:

> Reporters work most efficiently when they know what their interview sources will say. This sounds counterintuitive, but it helps explain why

> reporters rely on familiar sources – they can predict in advance who will give them the information needed to flesh out the angle. (p. 120)

Not only reliance on identical sources but repetitive messages are the norm within mainstream news organizations. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) explain why this is important.

> When the media 'converge' around a few key sources and certain issues, the result is that the media have more power to influence the audience – there are fewer 'voices' and hence less diversity in media content. (p. 59)

Not only are the same sources likely to be seen in news report after news report, but not all sources are equally likely to be contacted in the first place. Gans (1979), for example, explains that those with political or economic power are more likely to influence journalists than those who lack this power. This notion goes a long way in reinforcing Gramsci's theory of hegemony and mass media as an ideological force which helps to maintain those in positions of power. Gitlin (1980) explains that media, by marginalizing and delegitimating voices that fall outside of the dominant circles, "certifies the limits within which all competing definitions of reality will contend" (p. 254). These voices "outside of the dominant circles" are often referred to as deviant. But deviance is not clearly and easily defined – rather it is a changing and continually redefined and negotiated concept. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) address news media's role in defining deviance:

> The media are continually coping with news ideas, reaffirming social norms, and redrawing or defining boundaries. Thus, communication is an essential part of defining deviance. Clearly, the media do not just convey the

> labels created by others. They make their own decisions about tone, emphasis, placement, and portrayal. (p. 225)

In her research, Shoemaker found that while groups and people considered deviant were given prominent attention, their legitimacy was likely to be in question and they were granted "less favorable treatment." She further explained that while the media do not necessarily erase deviant ideas from public discourse, news portrayals underscore their deviance and "the normal is reaffirmed by being presented routinely and in juxtaposition to the deviant" (Shoemaker and Reese 1996, p. 225).

Methods

Using textual analysis to investigate mainstream newspapers and news magazines, this study examined coverage joining conceptions of feminism to President Clinton. Four major national daily newspapers – *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post* – and two nationally distributed mainstream news magazines – *Time* and *Newsweek.* – were surveyed. I chose to look at these six media organizations because of the prominence they hold in American news media and for the ability each has to reach a large mass media audience. While all fit these criteria, a couple of the newspapers I chose hold even more prominent positions within the American news media. Gans (1979) notes how "editors of newspapers across the nation read the *Times* and *Post* before entertaining and assigning story ideas" (p. 91). In other words, these newspapers are known to set the agenda for news throughout the country. The *New York Times'* influence is thought to go even further. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) write that "the *New York Times* is considered the final arbiter of quality and professionalism across all news media" (p. 125). *USA Today*, on the other hand, while it is widely distributed and read, holds a much lower position of respect by many news media outlets, professionals and scholars. These two newspapers, in a sense, are considered at opposites ends of the spectrum of "legitimate"

newspapers. I chose to include *USA Today*, however, to get at news stories aimed toward very different audiences. The *Los Angeles Times* was included in this research because it represents a large national mainstream newspaper from the country's west coast. I chose *Time* magazine and *Newsweek* because they are two of the most read mainstream national news magazines. I did not include "alternative" news outlets because the focus of this research is on how mainstream news presents feminism in relation to President Clinton and his extra-marital affairs.

Published articles in these six media outlets which both mentioned President Clinton and either feminism or feminist provided the data set for my analysis.[1] The search was conducted using the Lexis-Nexis data base for the dates from January 1, 1996 until December 1998.[2] While a number of citations appeared in the *New York Times* – a total of 58 – the search in the other five publications resulted in only a few texts for each, ranging from one to 15. Table 1 shows the number of citations that were located from each of the six publications as they appeared in six-month periods throughout the two-years of analysis.

Table 1 The number and time of year of the located texts.

	NY Times	USA Today	LA Times	Washington Post	Newsweek	Time
1998 July-Dec.	16	0	5	2	0	0
Jan.-June	36	4	7	4	0	1
1997 July-Dec.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan.-June	6	0	1	2	1	0
1996 July-Dec.	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jan.-June	0	0	2	0	1	0
Total	58	4	15	8	2	1

[1] For the search I used the keyword string "Clinton and Feminis*" which ordered the data base to locate any articles in the specified publications that included both Clinton and any variation of the word feminism or feminist.

[2] The search was conducted on December 2, 1998 and therefore does not include the entire year of 1998.

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While 58 citations were identified from the *New York Times* most of these articles were on the editorial pages. These included both commentaries by editorial staff, guest commentaries and, mostly, letters to the editor from readers. The largest category within the *New York Times*, in fact, was that of letters to the editor. Table 2 provides the break down of the various citations by the type of newspaper text. Editorials and opinion articles formed the second largest group of texts in the *New York Times* as well as the highest amount in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Table 2 Types of texts analyzed from each newspaper or magazine.

	NY Times	USA Today	LA Times	Washington Post	Newsweek	Time
Editorials/ Opinions	11	1	8	3	1	1
Letters to the Editor	43	0	1	1	0	0
News/Other	4	3	6	4	1	0
Total	58	4	15	8	2	1

By employing qualitative methods in the study of news content, this research focuses on the role of language in constructing meaning within the news. Through a close reading of news story text, this research identifies the dominant media frames used by the six news outlets. Because what is both explicitly and implicitly reported is important in terms of understanding the messages of a text, textual analysis is a useful method for supplying a better understanding of how issues are framed and ideologies are represented within news. The validity of my research assumptions will depend upon how well the text is shown to support the interpretations I have drawn. Meyers (1994) explains that while there are a number of possible readings of the text, each of the interpretations is and must

be contextually bound. Janesick (1994) explains, "Validity in qualitative research has to do with description and explanation, and whether or not a given explanation fits a given description. In other words, is the explanation credible?" (p. 216). Understanding that there is no single "correct" interpretation, qualitative researchers who undertake textual analysis explain that it is the context that provides for interpretive meaning (Janesick 1994; Punch 1994). As Punch (1994) writes, "... the meanings of things are not always constrained in what is communicated in a text, but rather, the context, awareness, and experience as tacit knowledge sets the tone" (p. 497). By taking into account the product, practices and commentary of a particular text, in this case newspaper and news magazine articles, this analysis is set in the context of a larger culture (Pauly 1991).

By following these guidelines, this textual examination attempts to achieve interpretive validity. In considering research conclusions, however, acknowledgment should be made about the researcher's reading position – informed in this case by feminist theory and other critical and cultural studies perspectives. This analysis also remains conscious of the different ways in which general audiences and researchers read texts. Researchers consider a limited number of texts repeatedly as they analyze meaning, while media consumers read a varied number of texts more quickly and superficially.

Drawing on the previous noted research I expect to find the following answers to my posed questions with these forms of evidence:

• Women are defined as either feminist or not-feminist in national mainstream news media and that this notion is established as an identity rather than a political movement: feminists will be juxtaposed to non-feminists and their identification will be clearly marked as either feminist or not; there will be more description of the women involved in feminism and identified as feminist and less about what feminism is.

• Women identified with feminism will be portrayed as less feminine and attractive than non-feminists and uninterested in men: among physical descriptions and

representations of feminist women will be notions that they are man-haters, have hairy bodies (armpits), do not wear bras and are lesbian.

• Women identified with feminism will be less likely to have or want a family: information and text construction which reinforces the notion that women who identify as feminists are less likely to have or want families; women identified with feminism will be juxtaposed to notions of family and to mothers and wives.

• Women identified as feminist will primarily be white; a restricting of voices and sources representing feminist movement will allow for mostly white women to speak for feminist movement.

• Feminism/feminist will be most often defined within a patriarchal framework: notions of feminism will be presented to highlight the deviance of the group by juxtaposing feminist to non-feminist and will reinforce notions of an ideal patriarchal female identity.

In analyzing the texts of these six newspapers and news magazines, I identified the major discourses (or frames) within the debate. Following are the main prongs within the discourse of President Clinton's extra-marital relationships and feminism/t with examples from the texts which help to articulate how these perspectives were represented.

Feminist Equals Hypocrite

From both reporters voices and quoted sources the most notable theme throughout the texts – including the opinion pieces, letters and news articles – was one of feminist hypocrisy. Many self-identified feminists and feminist organizations continued to support President Clinton throughout four publicized marital infidelities or sexual harassment allegations (whether substantiated or unsubstantiated) and this was seen in the pages of mainstream national news as being hypocritical and, ultimately, self-interested. One example is from a *Los Angeles Times* editorial in which a former Reagan White House female aide is quoted as saying "I'm surprised feminists have done a 180-degree turn on

this issue" (Los Angeles Times, May 13, 1998). On the opinion pages of *The Washington Post* another author wrote that

> ... the feminists who waxed apologetic about Anita Hill's charges seven years ago are now exposed as rank hypocrites for their silence and/or agnosticism regarding Bill Clinton's use and abuse of women. (The Washington Post, Aug. 7, 1998)

Other examples include:

> I think she [Gloria Steinem] has blinded herself politically to protect a man she sees as a champion of women's rights. (New York Times, March 27, 1998)

> The hypocrisy charge is sticking because some feminist leaders are making distinctions between Mr. Clinton's behavior and past accusations of sexual harassment. (New York Times, March 24, 1998)

> The feminists who now cry foul about the media overkill concerning President Clinton's sexual escapades must have short memories. (USA Today, Feb. 13, 1998)

This repetitive notion of hypocrisy is important because it reinforces the idea that to be feminist is to think one way. In other words, it does not allow for contradictions nor even subtle distinctions in viewpoints. It is not only the notion of hypocrisy that is noteworthy but that this is the theme most often associated with feminists in the analyzed texts. While many of these articles only briefly mention feminism and Clinton in the midst

of a larger textual discourse concerning political races, a number of the articles focus on feminist support of Clinton and bring to the forefront sources who call the support hypocritical. The story, in essence, becomes a story about how feminists are hypocritical in their support of President Clinton.

The Feminists

One of the most often found representatives of feminism or "the" feminist movement throughout the articles, commentaries and letters to the editors was Gloria Steinem. In one article Steinem was even credited with helping found the women's movement (though an impossible feat considering that the movement has been around for more than a century and Steinem has not). A more accurate description may be that Steinem helped to shape second wave feminism. This inaccuracy highlights the inadequate understanding of feminism from those who produced the media text. Steinem was quoted, referred to or mentioned in no less than 22 of the texts. The *New York Times* also published an editorial authored by Steinem about President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky. In the editorial she argued that the relationship between Clinton and Lewinsky did not involve sexual harassment (New York Times, March 22, 1998). The *Times* printed an in-house editorial about Steinem's piece and 13 letters from readers who responded to it. The significance of printing Steinem's editorial cannot go unnoticed. By providing space for Steinem, the *Times* in essence validated her voice as an official voice of feminism. This point focuses attention on who is officially allowed and, in turn, not allowed to speak formally in the name of feminism. It is not overlooked by one attuned to arguments about feminism as a white, middle- and upper-class movement, that, indeed, Steinem fits the mold.

Also often represented as the official voice of feminism was the National Organization for Women (NOW) and particularly NOW president Patricia Ireland. In all, NOW came up no less than 12 times in the articles, letters and commentaries. Another

frequently noted feminist voice – heard from no less than five times – was Betty Friedan, author of *The Feminist Mystique*. Friedan has been credited by many contemporary feminists with reinforcing the monolithic notion of white, middle- and upper-class liberal feminism. Again, both NOW and Friedan represent a kind of one-dimensional feminism. The fact that national news media rely on these women and organizations to most often represent feminism reinforces that limited notion of feminism.

Contrasting this image, however, is Anita Hill – the black woman who became nationally known after she charged then-U.S. Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas with sexual harassment. Hill certainly represents feminism in these texts, being referred to no less than seven times and even authoring an editorial, but a significant difference stands out in a number of the instances of her presence within the texts. While these other women mentioned above speak for feminism, Hill's placement in the discourse is notably different. It is in fact these other women – the *white* feminists – who can be seen as speaking for, representing and defending Hill in the name of feminism. Some examples (italics added):

> But the fact in itself should have been titillating enough *for the old war horses of the Anita Hill crusade* – like Rep. Pat Shroeder and National Organization for Women leaders Patricia Ireland and Molly Yard. (Los Angeles Times, June 25, 1996)

> It has been said that both Hill and Jones were *used by political groups* to further their own agendas, *Hill by the feminist left* and Jones by the conservative right. (Los Angeles Times, Jan. 11, 1996)

> Jones's attorneys have accused women's rights advocates of hypocrisy for not joining their client's case, though they *quickly jumped to the rescue of Anita F. Hill* after she publicly accused then-Supreme Court nominee

Clarence Thomas, a conservative, of sexual harassment. (The Washington Post, Jan. 14, 1997)

Especially significant about this last passage is the fact that, unlike the first two which were from the opinion pages, this one appeared in a front section news article. Note the use of the term "rescue" and that it was not placed within quotation marks. This is worth noting because the term cannot escape the value judgment the writer of the article places upon it. This can be seen as an example of how reporters ideologies about feminism and race seep into a reporter's work and ultimately into news texts. Equally important in these examples is the frequency in which Hill is grouped with Paula Jones. One might concluded that like Hill's race, Jones' socioeconomic status and the fact that she is a less-educated Southern woman marginalizes her. The two woman are both treated differently because they fall outside the mainstream conceptualization of "the feminists."

In examining who speaks for feminism and what feminists *look* like, I was struck by the use of the phrase "the feminist" and "the feminists" – phrases that construct a singular notion of feminism. In an editorial the author writes (italics added) "But *the feminist* response to the women accusing the President has posed with special sharpness the question of philosophical sellout" (New York Times, March 24, 1998). Another editorial on the pages of the *New York Times* reads "You were right about *the feminists*" (New York Times, Feb. 1, 1998). By using this phrase, writers and quoted sources both are reinforcing a notion that there is one, unified feminism.

The First Feminist

While a handful of women noted above tended to speak for feminism, a great deal of texts explicitly or implicitly named Hillary Clinton the "First Feminist." Also significant was how reporters and writers of editorials and letters to the editor contrasted Hillary Clinton with Tammy Wynette, country singer of "Stand by your man" fame. Wynette, in

these cases, represents the patriarchal female norm opposed to the "man-hating" feminist. Ironically, throughout these same texts, by "standing by her man" Hillary Clinton ultimately was represented as a betrayer of feminism in the national news. Writing about a standing ovation the First Lady received, one author explains "The tribute came at a moment when the First Feminist is reminding people more of Tammy Wynette, of 'Stand By Your Man,' fame ..." (The Washington Post, April 12, 1998). A writer for *Time* magazine reports

> It was the week that Gloria Steinem got laryngitis. Other feminists, however, will have a harder time explaining their stammering and mostly inaudible performance during Week I of Presidential Sex Crisis III. ... The sorriest performance, though, was that of Hillary Clinton. Widely regarded as our First Feminist, she spent last week singing Tammy Wynette's tune on all the morning soft-news shows ... (Time, Feb. 9, 1998)

Offering alternatives

While the examined texts primarily followed these above presented themes and conceptual features, alternative perspectives were allowed within the media texts, offering something other than a monolithic picture of feminism. In fact, the voices and perspectives went beyond just simply providing a varied notion of feminism – they even offered an understanding of some of the issues surrounding contemporary or "third wave" feminism. For example, one editorial about Paula Jones and President Clinton primarily addressed the problem of white feminism and some of black women's problems with it. It read:

> Whenever NOW has been in the news for a sustained period of time, I can count on hearing a comment like one of the following from my friends who are black women: 'There they go again; they still don't get it.' Or: 'They

> should call it the National Organization for White Women, or the National Organization for Wealthy Women because Miss Anne doesn't live in the real world.' 'Miss Anne' is code in the black community; she was the lady who ran the plantation and often meted out the discipline. ... A lot of black women who walk the feminist walk and talk the feminist talk refuse to be called 'feminist' because the word (like the acronym NOW) carries a lot of Miss Anne baggage. (Los Angeles Times, April 27, 1998)

While acknowledging these *alternative* perspectives and voices, there are two points I want to emphasize. First, these perspectives and voices were much more scarce than those themes and conceptual features noted above. My second point is that these viewpoints were offered primarily in the form of letters to the editor as well as in editorials rather than in the news pages. These points are not meant to completely dismiss the offerings of alternative notions of feminist movement, however, these points are important to understand within the context of news production. While it is true that the alternative voices were offered, many of them appeared on the same day and in the same newspaper so that overall the amount of days in which these alternative voices and perspectives were presented is actually quite narrow. In other words, the numbers of letters to the editor can be deceiving as is the number found in my analysis of the *New York Times*. Many of these letters appeared on the same day and under one heading. What this means is that if a person were to miss that days *New York Times*, they would miss any alternative presentations of feminism. Also these alternative voices and perspectives were nearly all printed in the *New York Times* so that the alternative voices and feminist perspectives had a limited reach. That said, it is still significant that the *New York Times* provided space to these alternative conceptions. Readers were exposed to the varied voices and opinions of people supporting feminism and provided an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of feminist political

movement. In one letter a woman argued that feminism is not about the constraints of monogamy (New York Times, Oct. 25, 1998), while another wrote

> I hope ... [the editorial] ... does not wish to define feminism as a neat category that has rules that must be followed. As a feminist I prefer to live in a world where women and men can bake cookies when they want and not bake cookies when they choose not to. The First Lady has certainly chosen to spend much of her time and energy not baking cookies but speaking out on important social issues. (New York Times, Aug. 28, 1998)

Conclusions

This research represents an attempt to grasp how mainstream national news media construct notions of feminism. Starting with an understanding that too often media texts communicate in either/or patterns which reinforce a lack of understanding of the complex world within which we live, this study examined presentations of feminism/t to conceive of the news frameworks within which the concepts rest. Using a case study – national mainstream news texts representing feminism and President Clinton's alleged and confirmed extra-marital relationships – this analysis supports the following points.

- The dominant discourse of mainstream news media constructs an either/or notion of feminist/non-feminist.
- Women identified as feminists are most often white women and only a handful of women represent feminism.
- While most often the text constructed feminism within a patriarchal framework – identifying feminists as deviant in their support of Clinton – alternative voices and perspectives were allowed space.

These findings are significant for a number of reasons. First off, if feminism is presented as an either/or choice for women then it reinforces a misunderstanding of

feminist movement. The mainstream national news media for the most part represented feminism in monolithic terms – women who identified with feminism were not allowed contradictory feelings about Clinton. The message from the news media texts was clear: either support Clinton and do not identify as a feminist or call yourself a feminist and do not support Clinton. Feminism and feminists, however, do not prescribe to a lengthy list of specific beliefs and non-beliefs as explained earlier in this study. In fact in recent decades one of the most central debates within feminist movement has been about this very point – stereotypical and monolithic notions of feminism are inaccurate. The news media, however, rather than enter into this dialogue, continues to reinforce these stereotypical beliefs. More beneficial would be a news media that helps to explain what feminism is and why some women feel active feminism is important. By allowing for a more diverse understanding of feminism the news media could aid in an understanding of our complex social world. As the news media presents feminism in the pages analyzed for this research, however, our world seems to be colored by simplicity – the news certainly does not help readers to grasp the complexity of feminism.

Furthermore, this simplistic and dichotomous notion of feminism may contribute to a distancing by many women away from feminism. In other words, the way feminism and feminists are presented in the mainstream news media could isolate women from feminist movement because they do not feel they fit into the cast reinforced by such news agents as the *New York Times* and *Newsweek* magazine. News media have the potential to serve an important social role, that of analyzing information and offering analysis about potential impacts. In this case, however, the news media failed in providing a multi-layered understanding of the relationship between feminism and feminist beliefs relating to President Clinton's extra-marital relationships. Gledhill writes about how groups outside of the dominant group – like feminists – need to form identity and promote understanding, something that the mainstream news media failed to do in this case. She explains that

> social out-groups seeking to identify themselves against dominant representations – the working class, women, blacks, gays – need clearly articulated, recognizable and self-respecting self-images. To adopt a political position is of necessity to assume for the moment a consistent and answerable identity. The objects of attack should not be identity as such but its dominant construction of total, non-contradictory and unchanging. We need representations that take account of identities – representations that work with a degree of fluidity and contradiction – and we need to forge different identities – ones that help us to make productive use of the contradictions of our lives. (p. 72)

As those practicing feminism strive to re-define feminism and feminist in terms that allow for diversity – rather than as only white, middle-class women – the mainstream news media continues to perpetuate the myth of feminists as white women. Especially since the 1970s feminism has continually been re-defined, yet media does not allow this discourse to be understood. hooks (1992) connects the maintenance of specific mass media images to white supremacist patriarchy and its institutionalization (p. 2). Her points reiterate the problem with the findings of this study, namely the almost complete representation of feminism by white women. As long as feminism is presented as primarily white then the mass media does in fact help maintain a white supremacist notion of feminism – one detrimental to women and beneficial to patriarchy – by further isolating women of color from feminist movement. In order to redefine feminism within the common understanding of our culture, "it is this term's positive political significance and power that we must now struggle to recover and maintain" (hooks 1984, p. 23). Praise to those media outlets that do open up spaces for alternative voices and perspectives – like those few spaces opened up to feminism in the newspapers analyzed for this study – may lead to more complex conceptions of the issues that influence our lives.

Further research in this area would strengthen this study. For example, in order to understand the political effects of textual ideologies, one must research the casual and random reading of these texts by their consumers. Only an audience study will show how typical readers – rather than a trained critic – perceive of these textual messages. After all, consumers of news are not passively consuming the cultural product. As Radway explains in her research about women reading romance novels, the notion that the textually processed package is swallowed whole is wrong (Radway 1984). Another shortcoming of this research is the fact that the analysis does not include photographs or images. Follow-up research should analyze pictures and art work presented with analyzed text. Unfortunately, data base searches on Lexis-Nexis only note whether graphics accompanied text but do not include these images. In order to further improve this study television news texts should also be added to the analysis. My assumption is that such an inclusion would offer a contrast to the newspaper analysis – texts would give less voice to the audience and more to the news producers.

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Status of Women

Running head: LIBERAL FEMINIST THEORY AND WOMEN'S IMAGES

Liberal Feminist Theory and Women's Images in Mass Media: Cycles of Favor and Furor

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Liberal Feminist Theory and Women's Images in Mass Media: Cycles of Favor and Furor

Abstract

Liberal feminist theory gained favor in the early 1970's during the second wave of feminism. Increased interest in research concerning women's equality reflected this popularity. The popularity of liberal feminist theory waned by the 1980's under criticism within the feminist research community. This literature review illustrates the evolution of liberal feminist theory in mass media research of women's images, and discusses the advances and future of liberal feminist theory in media research of the 1990s.

Liberal Feminist Theory and Women's Images in Mass Media: Cycles of Favor and Furor

Images of women in mass media have been analyzed for accurate reflection of realities of women in society, and for the effects media portrayals have on women. Feminist research in communication is one area of academia that has been instrumental in defining and implementing research pertaining to these issues. Specific methods and theories applied in analysis have varied over time, gaining favor and furor in cyclic fashion as feminism and mass communication scholarship intersect and evolve. The second wave of feminism started over thirty years ago, and in that time feminist research in communication has built a vast body of literature, which itself has been the subject of analysis by feminist communication scholars (Ardizzoni, 1998; Kitch, 1997; Rakow, 1986; Rakow, 1989; Shields, 1996; Steeves, 1987). These studies construct a historical review of feminist research in communication to reveal trends in research, to assess the effectiveness specific methods and theories, and to assert future goals of feminist communication scholarship.

As with any endeavor to understand the present and envision a future, evaluation of the past is essential. The

second wave of feminism began in the late 1960s and early 1970's, with liberal feminism bringing issues of women's equality into public and academic discourse. Liberal feminist theory developed into a perspective that could inform research regarding women's equality. The body of feminist communication literature first gained its place in academia during the advent of the second wave of feminism (Shields, 1996, p. 72; Rakow, 1986, pp. 17-18). Liberal feminist theory, a major component of this literature, has met with severe criticism from feminists inside and outside of academia. Critics in mass media research accuse liberal feminist theory of being limited in its effectiveness for changing and validly examining the status of women in society, and for not reflecting the diversity among all groups of women. Yet, an analysis of liberal feminist theory as it has been applied to the images of women in mass media reveals the evolution of feminism, scholarly research, and the status of women and in society. This literature review will critically examine liberal feminist theory to reveal trends in media research on images of women, assess the effectiveness and limitations in the development of the theory, and assert future goals of liberal feminist communication scholarship.

Liberal feminism traditionally has been concerned with women's political and economic rights. Liberal feminists seek equal opportunity for participation of women in established society. Therefore, liberal feminists believe if women have an equal opportunity as men to vote, hold positions of power, enter into male-dominated careers, and earn equal pay, then women will achieve autonomy in society (Tong, 1998, pp. 10-29).

One prominent area of liberal feminist research is mass media images of women. Liberal feminist theory informs media images research through assessing the incorporation of equal amounts of representations of women and men, and accurate portrayals of women as equals in business and politics. Equality of women, according to liberal feminism, is contingent on equality and accuracy in representation (Shields, 1996, pp. 74-75). In assessing such equality, media studies examine whether these images portray traditional sex role stereotypes of women as passive, wife, mother, and homemaker, or if the images depict women in roles of important decision-makers and successful professionals, independent of men. Since the early 1970s, liberal feminist research in mass communication has examined these gender stereotypes.

During the second wave of feminism, the advent of the Equal Rights Amendment and women entering the middle class work force, including academia, created an environment for liberal feminist discourse. This is reflected in the profuse research produced in the 1970's concerning sex role stereotyping in print and television. In mass communication studies during this time empirical research was the dominant paradigm, making content analysis of images of women in media possible and acceptable (Rakow, 1986, pp. 17-18; Shields, 1996, pp. 73-74; Steeves, 1996, pp.101-103). Rakow, 1986, confirms this gain in popularity, as well as cites criticisms of this media research, which will be addressed further in this review:

> Research on media portrayals of women and their effects on audiences began to appear in academic communication journals in the early 1970's, signaling that the topic was becoming a legitimate one within the existing frameworks of media research. The research tended to be undertaken by feminists who, operating within those mainstream social science frameworks, advocated changes in media content and the representation of women in media industries but left unchallenged the legal, economic, and social arrangements of the media. (p.18)

The first major studies of gender stereotypes focused on print advertising, due to the ease of content analysis and accessibility of print advertisements. Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971; Goffman, 1976; Tuchman, 1978; and Williamson 1978, published significant and often cited and

replicated studies on women's images in mass media informed by liberal feminist theory.

Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) is one of the first studies to analyze women's role portrayals in magazine advertisements. A content analysis of magazine advertisements from seven magazines were examined and categorized according to the depictions of women in occupational roles, non-working activities, and which type of products were being sold using women's images. The ads reflected four types of stereotypes; "A woman's place is in the home," "Women do not make important decisions or do important things," "Women are dependent and need men's protection," and "Men regard women primarily as sexual objects; they are not interested in women as people," (pp. 94-95).

Goffman's 1976 textual study of gender stereotypes in magazine advertisements is also considered a landmark study and has been often replicated. Goffman's study categorized magazine advertisements depicting the relationship between men and women terms of their expected roles and the underlying perpetuation of these gender stereotypes. Goffman decodes print advertisements by examining the facial expressions, body placement, head posture, relative size, and actions of the images in the advertisements.

The images were coded into six categories: *Relative Size*, size relationship of men and women; *Feminine Touch*, women caressing, touching, themselves, others, and objects; *Function Ranking*, show of superiority in and outside of employment settings; *Family*, how the nuclear family and interactions are shown; *Ritualization of Subordination*, physically lowering of oneself; and *Licensed Withdrawal*, symbolically removal of self from scene through gazing off in distance, or hiding behind hands for example.

The same year Goffman's study was published, Pingree Hawkins "scale for sexism" was created (Pingree, et al, 1976). The consciousness scale for media sexism ranges from level one to level five, showing the gradual evolution from women being limited by stereotypes (woman as non thinking, two dimensional decoration) to being free from all stereotypes (women and men as individuals) (Pingree, et al, 1976, pp. 194, 199). With this study a scale was created in which to measure not just the occurrence of sex role stereotypes, but to "tell us how *much* sexism is in any given presentation," which "would permit more meaningful, refined research in the future" (Pingree, et al, 1976, p. 193). Pingree, et. al.(1976) and Goffman (1976) demonstrate an advancement in liberal feminist media studies in that stereotypes research began to develop

beyond rudimentary counting and expand the categories of content analysis.

By 1978 feminist research had informed a large body of gender stereotype literature, enabling the publication of two major texts on stereotypes studies. Tuchman (1978) is a diverse collection of gender a stereotype studies, covering topics of sex roles in children's television, women in broadcasting, and women's news pages. Reflection hypothesis and symbolic annihilation, central in Tuchman's study(Tuchman,1978,p.7), are used to analysis equality and images of women in media. Reflection hypothesis and symbolic annihilation approaches analyze equality through looking at the inclusion of women in media representation, rather than assigning values to manifest images. Reflection hypothesis concerns audience perception and effects of media images, and measures to what extent women view themselves as equals when exposed to media images of women.

Williamson's Decoding Advertisements looks at stereotypes in print advertising using semiotic and ideological analysis, which examine audience perception and latent messages of images women in print advertising, respectively. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used in the diverse studies found in Hearth and Home

and Decoding Advertisements. These studies are representative the breadth of liberal feminist theoretical influence in media image research, and demonstrate liberal feminist theory is more than a limited quantitative approach, as critics in the 1980's and 1990's stated.

Rakow, 1986, p. 18, in the previous quote reflects a prevailing attitude of feminist researchers during the 1980's as liberal feminism and liberal feminist theory cycled through a phase of analysis and growth. Limitations of methods and perspective were questioned in feminist research communities, while content analysis of stereotypes in media images maintained favor in mainstream research.

Content analysis of gender stereotype images, the starting point of feminist media research, remained abundant until the early 1980s. Gaining popularity in the early 1980's, radical, social, multi-cultural, global and postmodern feminist theories emerged as the new enlightened and inclusive theories, eclipsing liberal feminist research. Liberal feminism and feminist research was cast in under a shadow of racism, classism, and heterosexism (Steeves, 1987, pp. 100-106; Tong, 1998, pp. 40-41.) During the 1980's studies evolved that echoed the changes in feminist theory. Shields makes this observation specifically about gender advertising research:

> Broadly the evolution in gender advertising research reflects many of the same trends as feminist theory across the social sciences and humanities. Inherent in this evolution has been a journey from a liberal conception of gender stereotyping (how women are treated unfairly an unequally) to a radical feminist conception (how men and women differ inherently and biologically), to a socialist feminist conception (how gender is created, maintained, and changed in discourse)….(p. 72)

Beginning in the early 1980s, liberal feminist theory was criticized for ignoring diversity among women and being inconclusive in explaining women's status in society. Liberal feminist theory historically has excluded the concerns of minority women, women of lower socioeconomic classes, and lesbian and bisexual women (Tong, 1998, pp. 35-43). Another criticism of liberal feminist theory was that it stressed sameness between the sexes, making maleness the norm for women to aspire to. A male standard precludes the examination or validation of women's differences from men or the diversity among women (Steeves, 1987, p.104; Shields, 1996, p. 78; Tong, 1998, p. 35). These criticisms are addressed by later studies in liberal feminist communication research (Dines, 1995; Lont & Friedley, 1989).

Thus, liberal feminist theory evolved, as feminism itself evolved, to include a perspective of diversity. Liberal feminist theory ideology incorporated diversity

inclusion and accuracy of representation for all genders, races, and sexual orientations.

In the late 1980's, content analysis gender image research is revived, revisited, and re-visioned. Replications of early gender stereotype studies have consistently been popular in mainstream research communities, and in the late 1980's regained favor in liberal feminist research as the theory undertook a retrospective approach. Cornerstone stereotypes studies of the 1970's (Courtney and Lockeretz, 1971; Goffman,1976; Pingree, et. al., 1976) were replicated by researchers in the 1980's and 1990's to reveal changes in the status of women over the past three decades.

Klassen, Jasper, and Schwartz (1993) used Goffman's study to analyze subtler visual cues in ads involving female-male relationships. Where Goffman focused on traditional gender roles and stereotypes, this study looks at gender equality in advertisement. Though not mentioned in the study, they use the same magazines analyzed by Pingree, et. al., 1976. Their content analysis of advertisements in Ms, Playboy and Newsweek showed that men and women, even in Playboy, "traditional depictions of women have been decreasing since the early 1980's and that 'equality portrayals' are on the rise" (Klassen, Jasper,

and Schwartz, 1993, p. 38). The researchers attribute the increase of women depicted as equals to men to the increase in women in the work force since the early 1980s.

The generalizability of the results, increased equality portrayals of women, to all magazine advertisements is a weakness of the study. It is a hollow claim that there is more "equality" in advertisements solely based on this study's results. This study does not analyze genres of magazines targeted at "traditional" women, such as Better Homes and Gardens, where women would still be portrayed in traditional gender roles of mother, wife, and homemaker. The study does not report the findings for Goffman's categories *Ritualization of Subordination*, *Feminine Touch*, or *Licensed Withdrawal*, which are indicators of sexualization of women in advertisements. Thus, the study does adequately go beyond the counting stage, and does not address for the simultaneous increase in the sexualization of women in magazine advertisements.

It is important to note that this study appears in the Journal of Advertising Research, which supports Rakow's claim that the 1970's content analysis approach to analyze women's images in media more favorable to certain areas of academic research and media industries (Rakow, 1986, p. 18).

Other studies do advance liberal feminist theory by incorporating expanded methods and combining qualitative and quantitative analysis. Mee-Eun Kang (1997) also uses Goffman's gender analysis as a basis for her content analysis of magazine advertisements to look for changes in women's magazine advertisements from 1979-1997. Her hypothesis stated that since women's societal status has elevated with the increase of women in the workforce, magazine advertisements should reflect this change. She used Goffman's categories, minus *Family*, and added her own categories of *Body Display*, revealing clothes or nudity, *Independence* and *Self-Assertiveness*, overall image of independence and self-assertiveness. A content analysis of randomly selected advertisements in Vogue, Mademoiselle, and McCall's showed insignificant change in the stereotyped images of women in advertisements.

There are two interesting findings in Kang's study. Kang's results match those of Klassen, Jasper, and Schwartz (1993) in that images of traditional gender roles of mother, housewife, and homemaker are decreasing. Yet, according to Kang's results sexualization of women has increased. *Ritualization of Subordination* results is the same as the Goffman (1979) study, *Licensed Withdrawal* images have increased, and Kang's category *Body Display*

shows a high increase of partial and total nudity. Though she does not expound on these results, in her discussion Kang offers the insight, "It seems that only cultural alterations are transferred to advertisements, while the underlying ideological foundation remains untouched," (Kang, 1997, p.994). Further research using an ideological hypothesis could explore the theory that as women gain economic status they are brought down through other means, such as sexual objectification.

Another study that advances liberal feminist theory is Sullivan and O'Connor (1988), which compares the results of the 1988 study with the results of Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) and Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976). The Courtney and Lockeretz's (1971) study is replicated in this study and in the Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976) study. The three sets of results are compared to assess how portrayals of women in magazine advertising have changed over time. Results of this study show "current advertisements in some ways more accurately reflect the true diversity of women's social and occupational roles than do those of earlier time periods" (p. 181).

According to this study, statistics on women in the labor force show the number of working women increased, and the number of women entering traditionally male occupations

increased over the two decades (Sullivan & O'Connor, 1988, pp. 181-182). According to the previous studies on which this study is based, media are a reflection of society and therefore advertising should reflect women's changing roles in society (Sullivan & O'Connor, 1988, p.183).

Similar to the previously cited studies, Sullivan & O'Connor (1988) generalize the results from advertisements collected from eight magazines to the population of women in society. Unlike Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), Belkaoui and Belkaoui (1976), and Klassen, Jasper, and Schwartz (1993), Sullivan &and O'Connor (1988) recognize the limitations of the original categories and method, and attempt to address this limitation by using qualitative analysis in their discussion of demographics and portrayals of women (p. 187-8).

Like Kang (1997), this study is attempting to use content analysis for verification of content of images, and then apply qualitative methods of analysis to the discussion of the results. Though these studies do advance liberal feminist research, they are not inclusive of a diversity of women. Other studies published at this time expand 1970's stereotypes research to include a multi-cultural and global perspective.

Studies in the late 1980's through the late 1990's have evolved from the 1970's studies in two prominent ways. The studies of the 1980's and 1990's do more than replicate stereotypes research; they focus on gender, race, class, and sexual orientation issues. Shields (1996) describes the diversity in research, and also adds that new gender stereotyping studies also focus on specialized areas of business dress, sex role stereotyping of children on television, and cross cultural and international gender representations (p. 76). In accordance with Shields' observations, these new studies reflect the evolved and inclusive focus of contemporary liberal feminism in society. Contemporary liberal feminist organizations such as NOW have agendas that include issues of welfare reform, civil rights, immigration policy, and other issues concerning minority and working class women (Tong, 1998, p. 41).

By 1989 liberal feminist theory evolved and influenced a large body of research enabling the publication of two major texts on diversity and media studies. Representative of the literature, Lont and Friedley (1989) includes studies of gender diversity in popular culture, and chapters on methodological approaches and new directions in sex and gender in communication. These studies and essays

chapters on methodological approaches and new directions in sex and gender in communication. These studies and essays examine gender equality and images of women in terms of stereotypes, thus making them informed by liberal feminist theory. This publication is similar to the late 1970's studies in that it specifically focuses on how to effectively combine content analysis and qualitative studies, and expands liberal feminist theory by seeking to define theories of gender.

Six years after the Lont and Friedley (1989) reader liberal feminist theory continued to inform new methods and theories of diversity in mass media scholarship. The Dines and Humez (1995) reader also offers scholars several media images studies issues using a variety of methods, and examining a diverse group of women and men. Similar to the Lont and Friedley (1989) reader, this anthology contains studies concerned with equality of gender, race, and class, and also includes sexual orientation studies in mass media images.

The majority of these studies use content analysis, and the results have shown little change over the past three decades in accuracy and inclusion of media image representation of minority, working class, and lesbian and bisexual women. The apparent lack of changes between the

the limitation of liberal feminism and content analysis (Steeves, 1987, p. 102).

As with the 1970's stereotypes research, the 1980's and 1990's race, class, and sexual orientation focused studies have been criticized. Rakow (1986), Steeves (1987), and Ardizzoni (1998) criticize the method of content analysis as being limited in its ability to generalize the numerical data found by counting images to the realities of women in society. Content analysis does not explain why there has been insignificant overall change in the images of women. It can not accurately assess the real status of women as compared to media representations. Nor can it explain how women and men see images differently. By employing empirical methods, liberal feminist research is limited in its growth beyond counting (Ardizzoni, 1998, p. 302; Rakow, 1986, p. 18; Steeves, 1987, pp. 101-103).

Content analysis studies continued to be met with criticism and rejection from sectors of the feminist research community, without being recognized as the first stage of building a body of literature, as demonstrated in the development of stereotypes literature in the 1970's. However, during the 1980s and 1990s liberal feminist theory

did maintain a place in mainstream academia, business, and government agencies.

Acceptance of liberal feminist research, especially content analysis research, can be found in not only in mainstream academia, but also in government agencies and media industries, such as advertising. According to Rakow, 1986, it is easier to accommodate women and minorities by instituting policies and making content changes in media than it is to change the socio-economic systems. Liberal feminist research does not challenge the underpinnings of societal institutions, rather it is concerned with equal opportunities within those institutions. Therefore liberal feminist research is more accepted by those social institutions (Rakow, 1986, p. 18).

While liberal feminist theory had not regained acceptance in feminist research by the early 1990s it seems to have regained some popularity in mainstream media research, as evident in the "revisiting" of the 1970s media images research. Liberal feminist content analysis research is of particular interest in popular culture, sociology, and marketing journals (Bretl & Cantor, 1988; Kang, 1997; Klassen, Jasper, & Schwartz, 1993; Sullivan & O'Connor, 1988). Shields lends an explanation as to why:

> The evolution in intellectual work on gender and advertising over the past three decades reflects not only the historical location of academic research at different times and in different geographic locations, but also academic research's often uneasy relationship to the feminist political movement…. (p. 72).

Liberal feminist theory is not always accepted in academic communities. Under these circumstances, the mention of liberal feminist theory is omitted from research reports. According to Shields, 1996, and Steeves, 1987, unarticulated liberal feminism, liberal bias, and implied liberal feminism are three terms for the omission. In most liberal feminist research, the mention of liberal feminist theory is omitted. This omission causes underdevelopment of liberal feminist theory, which is another criticism of liberal feminist theory. (Shields, 1996, p. 76; Steeves, 1987, p. 101, 104). This brings liberal feminist theory to a point where it is searching for a place for articulation and development. Research from the 1980's through 1990's shows liberal feminist theory to have gained favor in other academic research communities, yet still incurring furor within the feminist research community.

The feminist literature reviews of feminist scholarship in mass communication research also have a cycle. In the middle 1980's, reviews of liberal feminist theory gained momentum and severity. As demonstrated in

this literature review, liberal feminist theory is heavily criticized for not being inclusive of all groups of women, and for not being able to make meaningful contributions to feminist mass communication research. Kitch (1997) and Ardizzoni (1998) offer an easing of criticism, and an urging of cooperation in the feminist research community.

Ardizzoni (1998) contains criticism of liberal feminist theory, the focus of the essay is on expansion and integration of research in the feminist research community. Her plea is for feminist research to continue to be less content analysis oriented, and be more inclusive of gender, class, race, ethnicity, and global feminist issues. Content analysis, according to Ardizzoni is synonymous with liberal feminist research. Research needs to bridge the gap between quantitative and qualitative methods through "research able to contextualize empirical data within the socioeconomic and historical relations that produced them" (Ardizzoni, 1998, p. 302).

Kitch, 1997, also concludes that cooperation is a necessary goal for the future of feminist research in communication. Kitch asserts that the "dominant theoretical perspectives on women's media imagery…are not necessarily mutually exclusive and can be integrated in rich critical work" (p. 486). Her literature review is a historical

perspective of women's images in mass media research. This body of work is placed into four categories; "stereotypes approach", "search for alternative images", "examining imagery as ideology", and "reading of images as polysemic texts." Kitch acknowledges that there are many more theoretical perspectives, but uses the four categories as a means to discuss the literature (p. 477).

Kitch believes combining approaches is the new direction for feminist research. For instance, combining stereotypes approach with ideological approach will enhance both theoretical approaches. This will also have the effect of "disrupting the neat timeline of 'advancing' theory in the field" (Kitch, 1997, p. 485). Without mentioning liberal feminist theory, or any particular theory, Kitch encourages feminist researchers to look beyond the segregation of theory and approaches. She encourages feminist researchers to rethink theory building, conceptualizing myriad theories simultaneously influencing and informing as the whole feminist community evolves, rather than advances.

As demonstrated through this literature review, liberal feminist theory has been instrumental in developing a body of liberal feminist media research. Through replication, expansion, and criticism, liberal feminist

theory improved and influenced feminist research. Theory building is an arduous process, contingent on critique and debate. The feminist research community, which liberal feminist theory is an integral component, has evolved through recognizing itself as a diverse dynamic system and enduring cycles of challenge and growth.

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Reporting the Birth and Death of Feminism: Three Decades of Mixed Messages in *Time* Magazine

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Reporting the Birth and Death of Feminism:
Three Decades of Mixed Messages in *Time* Magazine

ABSTRACT (75 words)

This paper offers a rhetorical analysis of *Time* magazine's coverage of the second wave of the American women's movement, not just of feminism's "birth" and "death," but everything in between. A close examination of 35 cover stories (1969-1998) reveals that the magazine's ambivalence, expressed through a mix of contradictory messages packaged as recurring "lessons," was in place from the start--and that its treatment of feminism has been more complicated than the backlash theory suggests.

Reporting the Birth and Death of Feminism: Three Decades of Mixed Messages in *Time* Magazine

In the summer of 1998, *Time* asked on its cover, "Is Feminism Dead?" The question stood out against a funereally-black background under the disembodied heads of Susan B. Anthony, Betty Friedan, Gloria Steinem, and . . . the TV sitcom character Ally McBeal. The cover story remembered the 1970s--when *Time* itself had proclaimed women's-rights activists its "Women of the Year" for 1975--as an era when

> feminists made big, unambiguous demands of the world. They sought absolute equal rights and opportunities for women, a constitutional amendment to make it so, a chance to be compensated equally and to share the task of raising a family. But if feminism of the '60s and '70s was steeped in research and obsessed with social change, feminism today is wed to the culture of celebrity and self-obsession.[1]

Time's nostalgia for an earlier chapter in the story of women's rights is a reference to what Susan Faludi called the "backlash" against American feminism in her 1991 bestselling book of the same name. Yet, as Faludi pointed out, *Time* and other journalistic media contributed to the "trend" of backlash as much as they reported it, placing the blame for feminism's demise on women themselves even while finding most of their evidence in media imagery. Legal scholar Deborah Rhode agrees: "In the autopsies of the movement, most authors come to bury rather than to praise their subject. The diagnoses vary slightly, but feminists are almost always to blame."[2]

Faludi accuses the media of dismissing the very gains they once championed in their coverage of women. To find out how this happened, and to attempt to understand why, this paper analyzes all of *Time*'s major coverage of the "second wave" of the American women's-rights movement over the past 30 years--its cover stories on not just feminism's "birth" and "death," but everything in between.

This study confirms *Time*'s role in (as well as reporting of) the media backlash against feminism. Its coverage since the 1960s contains all of the elements necessary to make a case for

"backlash": curious exploration of a new phenomenon, acceptance and even championing of women's rights, warnings about feminism's negative consequences for women, and a surprised assessment that most women reject feminism. Yet the evidence suggests that the way in which *Time* communicated these mixed messages was complex, a process not of reversing an earlier position, but rather of establishing and returning to themes that, over time, allowed for significant flexibility in the magazine's position on the issues. It reveals that, even as *Time* reported on the progress of and continuing need for a movement, all of the themes of the (supposedly later) backlash were in place from the start. In that sense, *Time* serves as a case study in how an influential, national journalistic medium plays a role in what seem to be societal shifts, shaping public perception of political movements and making sense of change in American life in an ultimately conservative way.

The Literature

Primarily this study positions itself within the context of scholarship and other criticism concerning the media's portrayal of the second wave of the American women's rights movement. It is territory well-traveled by critics inside and outside the academy. In her history of the second wave, Flora Davis acknowledges the role of journalistic media in spreading the news of the movement but accuses them of "deradicalizing" its message by focusing on the most mainstream activists and issues. Susan Douglas and Caryl Rivers have made strong arguments that journalists, while ostensibly interested in what was happening with American women, intended to bring down the organized political movement of feminism from its very beginning. Rhode similarly traces media stereotypes to the beginning of the movement, though she focuses on the present in her assessment of what aspects of media coverage "still need improvement": the demonization of feminists (or, at best, backhanded compliments), the personalization, and thus trivilialization, of political issues; the polarization of issues, a dichotomy in which "debates among women are cast as catfights" and "[m]en remain above the fray as seemingly objective onlookers, never opponents, in

the feminist struggle"; and a "blurring [of] the focus" that "encourages individuals to believe that they can meet all challenges individually."[3]

Bonnie Dow, who like Douglas examined images of women in fictional popular culture (in her case, television sitcoms and dramas), sees a distinct trajectory of stereotypes around the movement's second wave, from homemaker to gutsy career woman to a new kind of voluntary domesticity. This evolution confirms the thesis of Susan Faludi, who devotes most of her attention to the 1980s, what she identifies as the period of media and societal "backlash" that emerged in opposition to 1970s notions about women.[4] Faludi's work is by far the best known among the general public; indeed, as discussed below, it has been the focus of media musings on the strength or weakness of the movement today. Her notion of backlash is the prevailing view of what happened over the past three decades: that journalistic media first acknowledged and then dismissed the gains of women in the late twentieth century. This paper explores that view, to see if it is an accurate description of how this subject has played out in one influential journalistic medium, and, if so, to see exactly how that was accomplished.

To a lesser extent, this paper also draws on, and adds to, the body of research on *Time* magazine. There are several book-length studies of the magazine's corporate parent, Time Inc. (now a division of Time Warner) and its co-founder, Henry Luce, though most of these stories end with Luce's 1967 death and therefore do not deal with the women's movement.[5] One work, Richard Lentz's examination of the newsweeklies' coverage of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement, addresses some of the same issues this paper addresses, in particular the balance between *Time*'s acknowledgement of the importance of social change and its cautionary treatment of dissent.[6] With specific regard to *Time*'s coverage of women, two studies have examined the magazine's use of photos of women: Mary L. Matthews and Carol Reuss found little difference in the frequency of women's appearance in photos inside the magazine or in their roles--primarily entertainers and spouses--in 1940, 1960, and 1980; Sammye Johnson and William G. Christ found much the same occupational categories represented by females on the magazine's covers, with only 14 percent of issues between between 1923 and 1987 featuring women.[7] Since

this paper focuses on cover stories about women's political status, it adds to the literature by closely examining the material left out of, or the exceptions to the findings of, these previous studies.

Method and Theory

Time was selected as the focus of this analysis for several reasons. *Time* is the oldest and most widely-read (and therefore, presumably, the most influential) of the newsweeklies.[8] With regard to the choice of the newsmagazine medium, such periodicals have historically stated their mission to be not only reporting, but also explanation, forsaking the detached language of newspaper journalism in favor of a voice meant to establish their authority as national leaders and to make sense of American life.

Time co-founder Henry Luce made this goal manifest in his 1922 prospectus, and throughout his career he reiterated the subjective and interpretive function of the magazine. Luce's mission entailed an active shaping of the news into stories and lessons based on (his own) reason. "[T]he hell with objectivity," he told his staff in a 1952 speech, explaining that "seventy-five percent of the business of recognizing, selecting and organizing facts is having a correct value judgment." He imagined his audience as male, and as ordinary Americans rather than urban elites; in a corporate memo, he urged his staff to think of the reader as "the Gentleman of Indiana, writing to him as man to man . . . ."[9] Though Luce died three years before *Time* first devoted a cover story to the women's movement, its language and mission informed that coverage (particularly, as will be discussed in this paper, its assumption that the core reader was male), and its subjective voice and heartland appeal continue to characterize the magazine today.[10]

In terms of its theoretical base, this study embraces the notion that journalism does indeed work much the way Luce envisioned--not as the product of impartial scientific method, but rather as a form a cultural production, which Raymond Williams defined as a matter of selection and interpretation based on culturally-specific factors. In this role, the media are a part of (rather than standing apart from) "society" itself, and cultural norms both guide and follow from journalists'

choices. James Carey explains this "ritual view of communication" in which news media work toward "the maintenance of society . . . the creation, representation, and celebration of shared even if illusory beliefs." In such a view, news is presented in familiar formats and themes that have meaning because they already "make sense" to audiences. "The facts, names, and details change," write S. Elizabeth Bird and Robert Dardenne, "but the framework into which they fit--the symbolic system--is more enduring."[11]

Thematic repetition is a major focus of scholarship in this paradigm; it also is one of the themes identified by Catherine Covert in her re-viewing of journalism history from a female perspective. She urged other scholars to analyze media with an eye toward "the implications of repeated messages over time, of repetitive forms, of reiterated values," which collectively position the press "as a conservator of values" rather than "its usual assumed role as enunciator of the new, as inciter of change."[12]

This paper searches for such patterns--for the aspects of *Time*'s coverage of the women's movement that link the cover stories thematically and stylistically, no matter what the point on the liberation/backlash curve--as a way of understanding how the magazine may indeed have "conserve[d] values" at the expense of "enunciat[ing] the new," the purported function of journalism. Clearly the movement was "news," and many of the beliefs and actions reported in these stories were novel ideas to readers. What's more, the lengthy cover stories analyzed in this paper reported on, quoted, and pictured women to an extent unprecedented in the magazine. Yet it did so within a framework of recurring stereotypical themes.

This study explores how news media present new ideas in ways that ultimately confirm old values. Such a process is not accidental or evolutionary, as the word "backlash" suggests; it is systematic. *All* of *Time*'s reporting on the women's movement (not just its most recent stories) simultaneously acknowledged and dismissed the gains and messages of feminism. Its three decades of coverage of the movement are an example of the media's role in political and cultural hegemony, a system of power in which controversial opinions are aired (rather than suppressed), though in ways that weaken their message.[13] This is complicated cultural work, particularly with

regard to discussions of women's lives--as Faludi admits, "not a conspiracy" but a phenomenon whose "workings are encoded and internalized" and whose "lack of orchestration, the absence of a single string-puller, only makes it harder to see--and perhaps more effective."[14]

The critical method used to analyze the magazine's coverage is rhetorical analysis, an examination of not only *what* was reported, but also (and primarily) *how* it was explained, how the story of the women's movement was told, what aspects of it were emphasized and why, what was excluded and why. It pays particular attention to the language used to discuss feminism, considering Jean Ward's argument that journalism portrays women in ways that suggest that they are something "other" than either the writer or the reader.[15] More broadly, it traces patterns in rhetorical conventions, with attention to both consistencies and changes over the years.

This study examines *Time* cover stories published between 1969 and 1998. It devotes extensive analysis to nine that have been overtly about the movement, including two "special issues" devoted entirely to women's rights. It also considers the contextual significance of more than two dozen other cover stories published during this period that were ostensibly about more specific topics--but were actually about the consequences of feminism.[16]

Cover Stories on the Women's Movement

Time's first article on feminism as a political movement was only marginally linked to the issue's cover topic: under the coverline "Counterattack on Dissent," the cover of the November 21, 1969 issue showed the faces of men only, both political leaders and young male protesters. Yet inside the magazine, the publisher's letter attempted to make a connection between anti-war dissent and the subject of its "Behavior" section for the week, another "body of dissidents whose voice, while comparatively muted until now, promises to grow much louder in the months to come: the militant new feminists of the Women's Liberation movement." Further connections were made in the article itself to the civil rights movement ("Sexism is their target and battle cry--as racism is the blacks'") and the youth movement ("younger women, part of a rebellious generation, are fertile ground for the seeds of discontent").

Yet this early piece established the tone and parameters for the magazine's future coverage of the women's movement as a separate phenomenon. It reported statistics that convincingly documented prejudice against women and explained its social and economic consequences as problems that need to be changed. Yet it warned that "[w]omen's rising expectations . . . are increasingly out of kilter with reality" and described a forthcoming "revolt" by women that would "make the black problem look comparatively easy to solve" (a phrase that shows the extent to which *Time* was still written for a white male reader even after Luce's death). The following passage set the stage for many of the themes that would quickly emerge in *Time*'s coverage of feminism: "Many of the new feminists are surprisingly violent in mood, and seem to be trying, in fact, to repel other women rather than attract them. Hundreds of young girls are learning karate, tossing off furious statements about 'male chauvinists,' distributing threatening handouts ('Watch out! You may meet a *real* castrating female!') . . . ."[17]

The female activists described in this 1969 article as "the angries" were the main subject of the magazine's first cover story on feminism a year later. Although the cover featured an individual woman, feminist author "Kate Millett of Women's Lib," the article focused on an explanation what women's liberation was, why and how it was happening, and what male experts (psychologists and anthropologists) thought of it. It contained three sidebars: a brief profile of Millett, an essay expressing what the editors called the "very personal and partisan speculations" of (then-)*New York* magazine writer Gloria Steinem, and an essay from an "unchauvinist" male social anthropologist who patiently explained that relations between men and women had been one way for "several million years" because men needed a certain "sexual politic" in order to function. Even so, the extensive article documented women's real problems and the very real growth of the movement among American women, largely in a tone of wonder.[18]

That wonder culminated in a 1972 "Special Issue" on "The American Woman" that devoted more than 100 pages to the movement. The cover illustration was a transparent head of a woman, shown in profile, crammed with objects symbolizing everything on her mind: a baby's head, a "Shirley Chisholm for President" button, a typewriter, a credit card, a photo of a bride and groom,

ballet slippers, a hair curler, a spatula, a voter registration card, a women's-liberation-symbol button. With women's problems and progress as the theme of not just the features, but also every department, this issue was by far the most extensive coverage the magazine had ever (or has since) devoted to feminism. The issue began with more than two dozen letters from readers (solicited in advance for the special issue), most in support of the movement. Its densely-reported text--accompanied by more than 100 photos of women--included the work of 19 female *Time* staffers, though their contributions were made largely in departments. While it contained numerous warnings to women about the difficulties of modern life, this issue served primarily as a powerful document of both discrimination and accomplishment.[19]

The magazine focused less on problems than on individuals in its issue that gave what was normally its "Man of the Year" designation to American women.[20] Though its cover featured head shots of 12 specific high-profile women (among them Betty Ford, Billie Jean King, and Barbara Jordan), the cover story was about the achievement of women in general. The dozen women shown on the cover were only the subject of a sidebar, and the 10-page cover story's three dozen photographs of female achievers in all fields lent the article a celebratory look. Yet its focus was on the isolated achievers, and it defined feminism in 1975 as a matter of personal choice rather than group politics, explaining, "feminism has transcended the feminist movement . . . . A measure of just how far the idea has come can be seen in the many women who denigrate the militant feminists' style ('too shrill, unfeminine') and then proceed to conduct their own newly independent lives." The article listed the achievements of specific individuals before moving into a section detailing the failure of the organized women's movement itself and explaining why the Equal Rights Amendment "made many voters, especially women, nervous." It concluded with a discussion of the "delicate dilemma" of balancing family and work, "hard choices" that each woman needed to solve on her own rather than "through cold ideology."[21]

The magazine once again considered the impact of feminism as a political movement when it gave cover-story status to the 1977 National Women's Conference in Houston--though the cover photo was of a beautiful, smiling, blonde individual delegate. The article itself was an

extraordinarily mixed message: beginning with praise for the 14,000 female delegates, it ended as documentary on factions among women and issues (the ERA, lesbian rights, and abortion) which, the writer suggested, would surely divide women. Indeed, the defeat of the ERA put the movement back on the cover in 1982, symbolized by an odd illustration of a woman's face bisected by a staircase and drenched in sweat. The publisher's letter mentioned the magazine's "Women of the Year" and Houston stories, noting that just five years earlier "*Time* detected a new-found confidence" in American women. Now that confidence was evidently gone, implied the cover story, which reported among women a "wide gulf between something and satisfaction" and a "reluctance, on the part of many women, to be drawn even into the fringes of the movement."[22]

By 1989, feminism was no longer political, but personal, and women were stressed out. "In the '80s they tried to have it all. Now they've just plain had it," read the cover blurb next to an illustration of a woman--carved out of *wood*--holding baby and briefcase; the table of contents page explained that "some look back wistfully at the simpler times before women's liberation." This cover story (one of the most-frequently quoted of *Time*'s "backlash" stories, and one of the most prominent press attacks that fueled Faludi's argument) claimed: "Hairy legs haunt the feminist movement, as do images of being striden and lesbian. Feminine clothing is back; breasts are back; motherhood is in again." Though it included statistics documenting women's progress in the workplace and poll results revealing the continuing support of most American women for feminist goals, the text focused on young women who felt embarrassed by the feminist label and older women who were tired and bitter. And though it suggested that feminism was obsolete only because it was "a victim of its own resounding achievements," the magazine cautioned that "if feminism won its war, lifting women's status and self-respect, there are still enormous battles ahead and handicaps for American women to overcome."[23]

If the 1989 issue didn't mean to kill off the older guard of the women's movement, its special issue titled "Women: The Road Ahead"--more commercial than political in purpose--surely did. An editor's note declared the 1990s "the postfeminist era," and its cover story, "The Dreams of Youth," praised a new generation of young women who had "inherit[ed] a revolution that has

largely been won," who were "[e]ager to achieve their goals without sacrificing their natures," and who hoped "to strike a healthy balance at last between their public and private lives: between the lure of fame and glory, and a love of home and hearth." Available to help readers find that balance was the issue's single advertiser, Sears. Interspersed among upbeat features on women's professional accomplishments (largely in politics and entertainment) were ads featuring attractive, individual women and quotes in which they proclaimed their self-confidence and success in terms of what they bought from Sears. Displaying her bracelets, one young woman said, "Sparkle comes from within. But a little outside help couldn't hurt"; another, posed in front of a computer she bought at the store, quipped, "The difference between my mother and me? She still thinks software is a nightgown"; from a third, cuddling her young daughter at home: "I'm a senior partner in a very successful enterprise. My family."

Family, it turned out, was of great concern to young women. "Disheartened by their mothers' guilt during the '70s and their older sisters' exhaustion hauling baby and briefcase through the career traffic of the '80s, today's young women have their own ideas about redefining the feminine mystique," the cover story explained. It quoted one 24-year-old: "'We have a fear of being like the generation before us, which lost iself . . . . I don't want to find myself at 35 with no family.'" To such women, the writer explained, "the feminist label is viewed with disdain and alarm: the name Gloria Steinem is uttered as an epithet."[24]

Two years later, Steinem herself--with Susan Faludi--was on the cover of *Time* in a report that claimed (as if it were news) that "a backlash has hit the women's movement" and attempted to explain "why many women turned against feminism in the 1980s" (no mention was made of why men, or the media, turned against women). Though the focus on Steinem and Faludi was presented as an opportunity for these two feminists to have their say, *Time* presented a "historical" summary of the women's movement that conflated backlash with feminism itself: "in the 1980s," it reported, "feminism came to mean denigrating motherhood, pursuing selfish goals and wearing a suit. Whereas feminism was hip and fashionable in the '70s, antifeminism became socially acceptable in the '80s." And, despite its expressed interest in women's unhappiness, the article

took little note of real women, instead focusing on the popular-culture imagery discussed in one section of Faludi's book--but presenting it as evidence of cultural change itself. It also provided a photo spread of "Feminist Images" of "successful independent women who found new answers and a vital balance," deftly sidestepping the fact that these heroines were fictional characters (Murphy Brown, Roseanne, Thelma and Louise), not actual women.[25]

The same conflation of popular culture imagery and women's reality characterized the 1998 issue that pronounced feminism "dead" and feminists consumed by silly self-absorption. Gone were the ordinary women worried about work and child-care; instead, the article's opening anecdotes featured rock singer Courtney Love and a host of actresses caught up in "[f]ashion spectacle, paparazzi-jammed galas, and mindless sex talk," with television character Ally McBeal as the newest New Woman. A companion piece focused on today's teenagers, asking "What do the girls really want?" (a play on Spice Girls lyrics) but then analyzed young female *characters* on television, in the movies, and in song lyrics, interviewing only three actual girls (and two of them about what they thought of TV characters). "In an age in which image is often mistaken for both message and directive," the writer mused, "can girls truly tell if they're making up their own minds, even as they sing about telling people what they want?" The cover story lamented that in 1990s feminism, "the complicated, often mundane issues of of modern life get little attention and the narcissistic ramblings of a few new media-anointed spokeswomen get far too much"--without acknowledging *Time*'s own role in the process. "What a comedown for the movement."[26]

Other Significant Cover Stories

During the 30-year period of this study, *Time* published 27 other cover stories that made reference to the demands and consequences of second-wave feminism. Three of them were about specific women in political life (two on the 1984 nomination of a female Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate, Geraldine Ferraro, and a 1993 piece on First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton),[27] though the rest were about gender issues. Their subjects ranged from abortion to child care, from sexual satisfaction to marital stability, from date rape to domestic violence, from a

"new" trend toward maternity to the difficulties of adoption, from author Marabel Morgan's "total woman" obedience to the rage of film's Thelma and Louise. Yet they reiterated the themes of the magazine's women's-rights coverage and, over time, served as a way of keeping these lessons on the minds of readers. And though they purported to report on isolated developments, they paved the way for what would later be seen as the magazine's backlash against feminism.

In 1977, the same year it praised the triumphant success of the National Women's Conference, *Time* ran a cover story about Marabel Morgan, the antifeminist author of *The Total Woman*, about how women could find happiness in marriage through submissiveness. As with the other cover stories of the 1970s, the research was done by female *Time* staffers although the article was written by a man. Its title, "The New Housewife Blues" suggested that traditional domesticity was unfulfilling, and the article largely made fun of Morgan (whom the writer called "Marabel"). Yet it explained that "Marabel's books are significant as a kind of cartoon version of genuine problems that confront millions of American housewives today," women who "struggle every day not just with washing dishes but with maintaining values like loyalty, dedication and caring for others [and] complain that they now get very little help from their surrounding culture." The success of Morgan's thesis, the article claimed, was evidence

> that a remarkable number of American housewives . . . do not want to compete in the world of factories and offices . . . . From their harassed husbands, they want love and security more than new challenges or an exactly equal division of labor. They feel puzzled and threatened by the complex choices demanded of them, by the soft but persistent denigration of their role, even by a constitutional amendment that officially guarantees them equal rights in all things. And even women who have given up successful outside careers because they feel that caring for families is more rewarding yearn for reassurance that the traditional values still hold, that the traditional lives they have chosen are worth living.

In a profound irony, the same issue contained an essay, titled "Goodbye to 'Our Mary,'" lamenting the end of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, whose thirtysomething single-career-woman heroine, Mary Richards, "gave a humanely plausible version of American women . . . . Many women in the audience felt happier with themselves because of her."[28]

At the heart of Marabel Morgan's advice to women was sexual inventiveness, and most of the women-related cover stories of the 1980s and '90s had to do with how feminism had impacted either sexual relations or the consequences of sex. Chief among these issues, which would be the subject of four other *Time* cover stories,[29] was the controversy and legal battle over abortion, a subtheme of the magazine's coverage of the women's movement itself (chiefly, that it, along with the ERA and lesbianism, were stumbling blocks that divided "feminists" and "women"). The abortion cover stories appeared in temporal conjunction with cover stories on three other topics: violence against women (including domestic violence, date rape, and prostitution)[30]; sexual relations between men and women; and women's overwhelming desire to have babies.

The first two of these topics, it seemed from *Time*'s coverage, were related to each other, and to the women's movement. In 1984, the magazine's cover topic was "Sex in the '80s" and its proclamation, "The Revolution Is Over." Three years later, in an article on a study by sex researcher Shere Hite, it conveyed women's rage that "despite women's liberation and the sexual revolution . . . [women were] expected to play the traditional nurturing, love-giving roles while helping out as breadwinners"; even worse, Hite found, "was the pervasiveness of 'private emotional violence' inflicted by men upon women."[31]

The third theme of triumphant motherhood emerged in *Time* cover stories of the 1980s and early '90s. A 1982 cover showed a beamingly pregnant actress Jaclyn Smith (whom the magazine called "Charlie's Angel turned Madonna") and announced "The New Baby Bloom," a trend in which "Career women are opting for pregnancy." The publisher's letter noted that its team of female reporters found women "eager to talk about everything from prenatal exercise programs to amniocentesis. As New York Correspondent Barbara Dolan discovered, 'Almost anyone you ask knows two or three women over 30 who are having, or have recently had, a baby. One woman I spoke with had 22 pregnant friends.'" The cover story itself (illustrated with a photo of the pregnant Smith flying through the air on a stork) reported on what it called the "1980s Career Woman Impatiently Waiting," the woman over 30 who longed for "long-postponed babies," for whom "the biological clock of fertility is running near its end" because "[m]enopause will strike at

midnight." ("The fervency of that desire is becomming the common prayer of the 1980s," it noted.) The result: a "flowering of fecundity."[32]

Despite the fact that most of the working women profiled in this article planned to continue working, five years later *Time* sounded a warning. "Who's Bringing Up Baby?" asked its cover of the women who had made the "painful decision" to work after childbirth, thus facing a "wrenching personal problem": "day care is hard to find, difficult to afford and often of distressingly poor quality. Waiting lists at good facilities are so long that parents apply for a spot months before their children are born. Or even earlier." Though the main point of the article (apparent after the first three pages) was that the United States ought to develop a better child care system, it opened with powerful scare tactics, quoting male experts testifying to "some real horror stories out there, with babies being tied into cribs" and mothers who "return to the workplace grieving." Yet even such guilt-wracked parents should consider themselves lucky, warned another cover story of the late 1980s. Because of "legal abortion [and] the growing acceptance of single motherhood," it explained, childless women facing "new concerns about infertility" had to be "ingenious and relentless in their search" for babies: "Chasing after these scarce infants is harder than ever, as supply flattens and demand soars."[33]

In 1991 two newsworthy phenomena prompted renewed attention to women's anger. One was an actual news event, the treatment of law professor Anita Hill during the Senate confirmation hearings of Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas. The other was a film so resonant with female audiences and so controversial among feminists (whom the magazine quoted as though they were arguing with each other) that *Time* put the female stars on its cover and offered to explain "Why *Thelma & Louise* Strikes a Nerve." In many ways this latter cover story encompassed both women's frustration and the backlash itself.

Time's position on women's rage was evident in the identifying adjective it used in the attribution of its opening sentence (as well as a reference to the magazine's own previous rhetoric): "It is 'the first movie I've ever seen which told the downright truth,' says Mary Lucey, a lesbian activist in Los Angeles." Film critic Richard Schickel, who couldn't understand why such an

"enjoyable little movie," "a nice little switcheroo," was such a big deal, claimed that women's interpretation of the film was the problem:

> [its] makers, without quite knowing what they were doing, sank a drill into what appeared to be familiar American soil and found that they had somehow tapped into a wild-rushing subterranean stream of inchoate outrage and deranged violence. . . . The cost, though, is high. It is toward self-destruction that Thelma and Louise's road inevitably winds. For all the time they have been out there expressing themselves, a posse has been relentlessly closing in on them.

A female *Time* columnist concurred in a sidebar titled "Is This What Feminism Is All About?," noting "As a bulletin from the front in the battle of the sexes, *Thelma & Louise* sends the message that little ground has been won."[34]

The cover story on *Thelma & Louise* was accompanied by a sidebar featuring film stills of other gun-toting "formidable females," suggesting that all this violence was just a popular-culture joke. The same sort of humor surely accounted for the magazine's cover for its 1994 Valentine's Day issue, showing a pig wearing a suit and tie and asking "Are Men Really That Bad?"; the article inside, which also drew on images of men in popular culture more so than real life, jokingly excused them. The second-to-last *Time* cover story in this time period having to do with relations between the sexes showed a pair of wedding-cake bride-and-groom mannequins tied together, with the coverline "For Better, For Worse: The Growing Movement to Strengthen Marriage and Prevent Divorce."[35] The last cover story in this time period was the one that opened this paper--pronouncing feminism dead.

The Backlash Themes

As evidenced by these many cover stories, what would later be identified as backlash message were themes that ran throughout all of *Time*'s coverage of the women's movement:

Men will never be able to understand women. This message, which presumes that the magazine's journalistic stance (and audience) is male, was more pronounced in the early coverage, though it remained in later stories as well. It partly explains why *Time* posed its female staffers for every publisher's letter, and it greatly explains the subtext of befuddlement in some of

the earliest articles. One dissembled, "it seems prudent to admit that the subject remains mysterious" because of "the residual mystique of women defined not so much by what they do as what they are." In another early issue, the "Letter from the Publisher" presented the challenge in nearly anthropological terms:

> Reporting on the activities of militant groups is never an easy task. Correspondents, no matter how concerned, are generally suspect as minions of the so-called "Establishment." Nevertheless, in the hope that they could gain an understanding of their subjects that no man could, *Time* drew widely on its large group of women staffers to gather material for this week's cover story . . . .

This masculine puzzlement was underscored by a frazzled sort of patience: the cover story referred to above, for instance, began: "These are the times that try men's souls, and they are likely to get much worse before they get better." Even later articles explained activism in a male voice of bemused reason. "It may have seemed funny and a little sillly when feminists started talking about men sharing housework and wives began insisting to husbands that homemaking was a tough job all its own," read one passage in a piece on the defeat of the ERA.[36]

Women's freedom is about sex. This is the clear point of *Time*'s most recent cover story on feminism, which declared in 1998 that "Today's feminists want to talk sex, not cents" and that the movement had been taken over by "media-hungry would-be feminists [who wanted] to share their adventures in the mall or in bed." Yet the magazine had always conflated feminism with sex, even in its broadest references to women's rights. A banner across the upper-left corner of its first cover about feminism, in 1970, read,"The Politics of Sex." Similarly, the magazine's special issue on American women two years later introduced its theme by explaining that "sex is too important to be left entirely to ideologues." Other early articles suggested the possibility of sexual improprieties by discussing "shower and toilet arrangements" of female and male military-academy cadets and sleeping arrangements of women and men working on the Alaskan pipeline.[37]

Good feminists are attractive. The sexual nature of "liberation" was more subtly conveyed in the magazine's showcasing of the movement's most physically attractive feminists. The most striking example of this was *Time*'s choice of cover subject for its story on the 1977 National Women's Conference in Houston, a lone woman who was blonde and smiling, identified

inside the magazine as "Peggy Koernot, 25, a Houston physical education teacher and marathon runner."[38] Particularly in the 1970s, *Time* reassured readers that many "liberated" women were attractive and feminine, sometimes going to absurb extremes with this message. One section in the magazine's 1972 "Gallery of American Women" began, "Janie Cottrell, 24, sank into her sofa in a pair of dark blue hot pants, crossed her showgirl legs and said, 'I wanted to be a certified welder more than anything in the world.' Which is just what she is." After telling her career-success story, the anecdote concluded, "She was such an attraction at the plant that the company provided her with curtains to hang around her station. After work she loves Atlanta night life, and her apartment is handsomely decorated with aluminum and steel designs created with her blowtorch."[39]

Even controversial feminists such as researcher Shere Hite were excused for being blonde and sexy. "Instead of [an] antimale polemicist," explained the publisher's letter in the 1987 issue that reported her study of women's rage about men's sexual attitudes, Hite was "a soft-spoken woman with a passion for classical music and antique clothes"; it also noted that she was married to a much younger man. And more recently, in its attention to Steinem and Faludi--both thin and attractive--*Time* suggested that their looks softened (or permitted) their activism: "Faludi makes an unlikely polemicist. Smart, shy, with a self-deprecating manner . . . With her schoolgirl demeanor and easy eloquence, Faludi defies many unfair but well-embedded stereotypes about feminists."[40]

Bad feminists are violent. This theme was conveyed through photos connoting something more than anger: marchers with raised fists, grimacing or screaming protesters, and a remarkable number of women in karate classes. References in text connected women's political goals with the desire to hurt men physically and sexually. The Kate Millett story, for instance, introduced the subject of her book *Sexual Politics* with this summary from her male dissertation adviser: "'Reading the book is like sitting with your testicles in a nutcracker.'" In the "Books" section of its 1972 special issue on American women, *Time*'s female writer reviewed works by 16 female authors who wrote about (or with) resentment, insanity, and rage.[41] By the time *Thelma & Louise* arrived on the screen, *Time* readers knew that however legitimately aggrieved these women might be, their murderous behavior justifed their end.

The movement doesn't represent real women. In its largest issue on the movement, its 1972 salute to "The American Woman," *Time* visited Red Oak, Iowa, where women admitted having some problems at work but would not declare themselves part of a movement: "Mention the words 'Women's Liberation' and the reaction is immediately negative," the reporter noted. "Said one woman: 'That means you're waving the red flag of liberalism.'"[42]

Such women were sometimes placed in opposition to violent feminists, as in a 1970 photo spread that positioned a shot of angry women's-rights protesters seemingly shouting "at" another photo of homemakers protesting against the movement, and in a photo of two women at the 1977 Houston National Women's Conference physically struggling over an abortion-rights poster. The opening section of *Time*'s cover story on that conference at first seemed as if it were going to refute this theme, describing the attendees as "middle-of-the-road, American-as-Mom's-apple-pie women" and quoting one as saying, "Now I know that all those other women feel the same way I do, so if they call themselves feminists, or whatever, then that's what I am too." Yet a sidebar reassured readers that the three First Ladies who attended were "all precisely coiffed, dressed with impeccable conservatism, ankles neatly crossed" and quoted Lady Bird Johnson as explaining, "'We don't look like bomb throwers, and we don't think like that either.'"[43]

By 1982, feminists were once again atypical radicals whose "rage" and "fierce, early rhetoric" had alienated ordinary women and thus had ensured the defeat of the ERA: "Instead of challenging women who had made lives of substance and happiness with husbands and children," the article explained, "it put them on the defensive, made them think they had betrayed not only their womanhood but their selfhood as well. There was a self-righteousness among feminists that kept all kinds of potential recruits away." And by 1989, the schism was not only political, but generational: "The long, ill-fated battle for the Equal Rights Amendment means nothing to young women who already assume they will be treated as equals. Feminist leaders . . . are dismissed as out of touch. NOW's call last summer for a third political party that would represent women's concerns seemed laughable to young women who do not want to isolate themselves by gender but prefer to work *with* men."[44]

The movement is falling apart. A related and consistent theme--not just in the "postfeminist" era but from the very beginning--was that the movement itself was in tatters. Every story quoted feminists criticizing each other, even as early as 1970 (when the magazine reported former NOW leader Ti-Grace Atkinson as saying, "'The whole thing is in a mess'"). By the time the magazine named "Women of the Year" in 1976, it described the women's rights movement as the casualty of "factional disputes" and NOW as "too radical and alienating [to] the masses of American women." Though *Time* proclaimed the 1977 Houston conference to have been a great success, midway through the piece the male writer recalled the "collapse" of the International Women's Year conference two years earlier and noted, "By running the convention so tightly, however, the organizers left themselves open to charges of rigging. . . . Even when debate was permitted, opponents of the resolutions often had a hard time getting heard." After quoting several pro-family and anti-gay-rights attendees, the writer concluded his summary of the conference by saying that it ended in "boisterous disarray."[45]

Several issues referred to (using author Susan Brownmiller's term) "the lavender herring" within the movement: the radical demands of lesbians, which threatened to destroy feminism. This issue was raised as a caution (or, as one article put it, a "difficulty"). "For years, men automatically shrugged off demands for female equality by labeling complainants 'nothing but lesbians,'" an early story explained. "The charge is manifestly unfair . . . ."[46] This kind of statement, while seemingly supportive of feminists, was repeatedly tossed into articles as a warning of the worm in the apple. Over time, these cautions gave way to explanations of why the movement was "out of touch" with the lives of real women, and to why even the movement's leaders couldn't get along. By the time it put Steinem and Faludi on a 1992 cover, *Time* was able to dodge any responsibility for criticizing them (and thus being part of "backlash" that was this issue's theme) by turning women against one another: it quoted feminist critics of Gloria Steinem (who accused her of "abandoning the cause" by writing about self esteem) and dismissed Faludi with a quote from Betty Friedan ("We must go from wallowing in the victim's state to mobilizing the new power of women and men for a larger political agenda on the priorities of life").[47]

Women are taking over men's jobs. This message was buried inside a seemingly more positive (if stereotypical) theme that the clearest sign of women's progress was their success at jobs traditionally held by men. Early articles about the women's movement showed photos of women dressed for, and engaged in, such occupations: a hockey goalie, a blackjack dealer, furniture movers (called "the Mother Truckers"), a banker, a welder, an airport runway worker, a radio disk jockey, a computer engineer, a "rocket technician," a stockbroker, an auto mechanic, utility repairpeople (up telephone poles and down sewers), a brain surgeon, a football coach, military officers and enlisted soldiers, a truck driver, an airline pilot, an electrician, a minister, a judge, a physics professor, a subway worker, a construction worker, a Congresswoman. This theme persisted through the 1990s, even in backlash articles suggesting that real women wanted to stay home: *Time*'s 1990 special issue on women profiled 10 high-profile "tough-minded women" including a Houston police chief, a rock climber, a rap singer (Queen Latifah), a bishop (Barbara Harris), and an "Indian Chief" (Wilma Mankiller) and included a trend story on how women "have made dramatic inroads into occupations previously reserved mostly for men."[48]

Even so, most "career women" face enormous problems. *Time*'s 1975 "Women of the Year" cover story was the most celebratory of women's professional successes. Yet in between the upbeat subheads (such as "Business: Inroads to Management" and "The Professions: Finally Making It"), the text addressed the issue of "the psychological handicaps under which many women labor," explaining: "many women are hobbled by a fear of success--a learned fear that the risks of succeeding are 'loss of femininity,' loss of womanly identity. The 'fear' is also quite practical--in the face of expected discrimination, a woman may decide that the effort so succeed is not worth it." It went on to say that, should a woman not be "hobbled" by such a fear, she would have to overcome "crippling guilt" over neglecting her husband and children and make sure that she did not succumb to the female tendency to "get bogged down in detail." Citing a survey of female business-school graduates, the author noted that "Anti-female prejudice leaves a mark even on the most successful women. Virtually all harbor memories of slights and obstacles that were--or are--put in their paths." Another early article reported patients'

distrust and co-workers' harassment of female physicians, while a story on women's "Slow Gains at Work" stated the reason bluntly: "Many male executives still feel profoundly threatened by the thought of working with women of equal or superior rank. Such insecurity often seems petty and selfish. Yet because the business world has for so long served as modern society's parallel to the ancient male hunting-providing experience, the insecurity is also understandable."[49]

Just in case women didn't believe that men's insecurity over workplace "equality" threatened their chances, *Time* made it clear that the bottom line always would. In 1992, in the middle of an article primarily about popular culture imagery, the magazine suggested that women shouldn't be surprised by economic repercussions: "If American women perceive a backlash against their progress, it is probably due more to what they encountered at work than on the screen or in the newspapers. The persistent recession pitted men and women against one another in a battle over job quotas that threw all the issues of economic fairness into bold relief."[50]

Men have their limits for tolerance. Though most women were not, in fact, working in traditionally-male fields, *Time*'s emphasis of such stories created the impression that women were invading men's territory. It also seemed to offer the logic for some startling anecdotes, such as this one from the "Women of the Year" cover story: "Because many men fear women will take their jobs away, there is much hostility. One woman apprentice machinist in Seattle was told by men workers that it was safe to put her hands into a container of acid. She did not." At the conclusion of the article, the author returned to this theme, warning, "it would be foolhardy to ignore the many men who regard the women's upsurge as a threat and try to keep women--wives, daughters, co-workers--'in their place.'"[51]

With repeated references to the movement's potential to emasculate men, the articles conveyed a threat that if women pushed too far, men would strike back. That retaliation could come in the form of the withholding of love, money, or respect. A male social anthropologist explained in 1970: "It's often difficult for males to perform sexually if they don't feel that the mood is just right. . . . It may just be that the phenomenon of sexual encounter depends on a sexual politic. And that without this politic, in the way it has been contrived for several million

years, there may not be any sexual encounter." Another story contained an anecdote from the social scene: "A card circulating in one Manhattan singles bar reads: If you're gonna say no, say it now before I spend all of my goddam money on you." The magazine explained that liberated women could not expect respect from men, quoting the male editor of a newsletter called the *Family Protection Report*: "If a man knows he can get you to go to bed with him, he's not going to bother to be interested in your personality." The consequences could be even more dire. An early issue contained this extraordinary warning from an unexpected source: "Margaret Mead, though in sympathy with most of the movement's aims, offers a caution: 'Women's Liberation has to be terribly conscious about the danger of provoking men to kill women. You have quite literally driven them mad.'"[52]

Later coverage, too, contained violent sentiments from men, even politically liberal men, poleaxed by the women's movement. The title of an article in *Time*'s 1990 special issue on women asked "What Do Men Really Want?" and answered with anecdotes like this one: "'The American man wants his manhood back. Period,' snaps John Wheeler, a Washington environmentalist and former chairman of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. 'New York feminists (a generic term in his lexicon) have been busy castrating American males. They poured this country's testoterone out the window in the 1960s.'" Men, the article reported, were particularly angry at modern women who couldn't make up their minds, an uncertainty that "can be brutal for a man whose wife tries life in the corporate world, discovers as men did decades ago that it is no day at the beach, and heads for home, leaving him the sole breadwinner."[53]

In the end, women will pay a price for liberation. This conclusion is related to the retaliation of men, though it also has been expressed in terms of personal unhappiness and stress. One article warned that many women truly did not want to admit how bad their marriages were, because then there will be "no turning back . . . their lives are going to change and there may be prices to pay." As early as 1972, a section of *Time*'s reader-letters department actually was headed with the word "Backlash" and included several women's complaints about the double

burden of paid work and housework. ("I have had my 'liberation' and the victory is hollow," one reader confessed).[54]

In the mid-seventies the magazine likened this problem to Communism, in which "women are theoretically equal, but their new freedom merely means that when they return from their jobs they still have to do all the housework." It told the story of Carla Hills--a working mother of four and the federal Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, one of the 12 women named "Women of the Year" on the cover--for whom "meeting the multiple demands of career and family takes great effort. . . . 'I often feel like a piece of salami, with a slice here for one and a slice there for another, and there isn't enough to go around.'" Her story was borne out by the fact that most of the other honorees were single and/or childless; one of them, North Carolina State Supreme Court Justice Susie Sharp, remarked, "The trouble comes when a woman tries to be too many things at one time: a wife, a mother, a career woman, a femme fatale. That's when the psychiatrist is called in at umpteen dollars an hour."[55]

Time's 1987 story on the research of Shere Hite concluded with an explanation of the "irony" in the rage she reported from women: "Women are finding that they cannot have it all: they are staggering under the burden of trying to be all things to all people--the nurturing parent, the successful careerist, the sexual athlete. Now they are asking men to play all these roles too. Can this work, or will it merely leave everybody frazzled?"[56]

By the time the magazine ran what Faludi identified as its first "backlash" cover story about women's exhaustion in 1989, its point was so familiar that it hardly should have suprised *Time* readers: ordinary women, who had trusted feminists to help them, had instead been cruelly duped, and they were the ones paying the price. "It is hard for them not to feel resentful," the writer explained, offering an anecdote about a working mother who "met [Gloria] Steinem at an awards dinner and demanded to know, 'Why didn't you tell us that it was going to be like this?'" Other mothers had been forced out of their homes and into poverty because of "no-fault divorce laws--passed in 43 states, largely in response to feminist demand." An even higher price was paid by working women who were not mothers: "The bitterest complaints come from the growing ranks

of women who have reached 40 and find themselves childless, having put their careers first. . . . 'Our generation was the human sacrifice,' says Elizabeth Mehren, 42, a feature writer for the *Los Angeles Times*. 'We believed the rhetoric.'"[57]

Conclusion

A survey of *Time*'s coverage of the second wave of the American women's-rights movement supports the contention that media have participated in a backlash against feminism, though it also reveals that this process has been more complicated than the backlash theory suggests. This analysis illuminates the problematic aspects of media coverage identified by Deborah Rhode--the demonization of feminists, the polarization of issues (and of women themselves), the personalization and individualization of what are actually group problems--by demonstrating how journalists accomplish these transformations through their choice of language and their articulation of moral-like themes that recur over time. In its attention to rhetorical strategies, this study also confirms Catherine Covert's belief that studying the history of women and women's issues in journalism means considering the cyclicality of journalistic messages.

To note that journalists have pronounced feminism dead in America doesn't mean that they have actually killed it, nor does it mean that they have never supported it. In her assessment of the state of American feminism in the 1990s, historian Flora Davis notes that "Contrary to suggestions in the media . . . . there could be no going back for a generation of women used to seeing female police officers, doctors, and lawyers, used to women in the military, in the pulpit, in space, and almost everywhere else . . . ."[58] Indeed, one might argue that this is the case today *because of* the very media those young women grew up reading, including *Time*, through which they "saw" such role models. For 30 years, the magazine has contained such images, reported statistics documenting discrimination against women, provided information on women's organizations and publications, and offered anecdotal evidence of how women across the country have dealt with workplace and family issues. All of this coverage has served to educate female readers (the wives

and daughters of Henry Luce's "Gentleman of Indiana") and to spread the news of the women's movement as a force in American society.

Such a service is part of a hegemonic power structure: real tensions have been publicly discussed, and useful information has been dispensed to women who may not have had other sources of such knowledge. Yet the rhetoric in which *Time* reported this news systematically undercut its benefits by questioning the movement's legitimacy and strength. And a close reading of the many articles the magazine has published over three decades reveals that its ambivalence, expressed through a consistent mix of contradictory messages, was in place from the start.

Understanding how this process happens in an influential national medium not only helps to explain the public's changing perceptions of American women, but also offers lessons for studying press coverage of any type of dissent. This case study (of one publication's treatment of one major political and social movement) suggests that journalists make sense of change by crafting lessons which, repeated over time in different ways, make the eventual "failure" of dissent seem natural. Yet by the time the audience is familiar enough with those lessons, it has heard quite a lot about the dissenters. Given the significant amount of attention *Time* has paid to women's issues over the past 30 years, it is unlikely that it will abandon the topic now; indeed, it seems likely that, in cyclical fashion, feminism will surface, in one guise or another, in its pages again. A historical and rhetorical understanding of how such news is communicated and interpreted will give media scholars a valuable perspective on that rebirth.

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[1] Cover, table of contents page (3), and Ginia Bellafante, "Feminism: It's All about Me!" *Time* (29 June 1998), 57; *Time: Women of the Year* (5 January 1976).

[2] Susan Faludi, *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1991); Deborah L. Rhode, "Media Images, Feminist Issues," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 20, no. 3 (Spring 1995), 691.

[3] Flora Davis, *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), 118; Susan Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female*

with the Mass Media (New York: Times Books, 1994); Caryl Rivers, "Flash--Feminism Is Still Dead," in *Slick Spins and Fractured Facts: How Cultural Myths Distort the News* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 102-113; Rhode, "Media Images, Feminist Issues," 692-703.

[4] Bonnie J. Dow, *Prime-Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture, and the Women's Movement Since 1970* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); Faludi, *Backlash.*

[5] Book-length studies include W. A. Swanberg, *Luce and His Empire* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972); Robert T. Elson, *Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise*, 2 vols. (New York: Atheneum, 1973); James L. Baughman, *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media* (Boston: Twayne, 1987); and Robert E. Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce: A Political Portrait of the Man Who Created the American Century* (New York: Scribner's, 1994).

[6] Richard Lentz, *Symbols, the News Magazines, and Martin Luther King* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990).

[7] Mary L. Matthews and Carol Reuss, "The Minimal Image of Women in *Time* and *Newsweek*," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (3-6 August 1985); Sammye Johnson and William G. Christ, "Women Through *Time*: Who Gets Covered?" *Journalism Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (Winter 1988), 889-97. By choosing the years 1940, 1960, and 1980 as benchmarks, the authors of the first study missed *Time*'s significant amount of coverage of the women's movement during the 1970s.

[8] *Time*, which celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1998, has a current weekly circulation of 4.13 million, leading the newsmagazine field (Audit Bureau of Circulations [Schaumburg, IL], as of June 30, 1998).

[9] Henry Luce, internal memo (n. d. 1939) and speech (14 November 1952), Time Archives, quoted in Swanberg, *Luce and His Empire*, 163, 331.

[10] James L. Baughman argues that *Time* has significantly changed since Luce's death, and has lost its national influence, because of its increasing tendency to cover "lifestyle" subjects rather than hard news ("The Transformation of *Time* Magazine," *Media Studies Journal* 12, no. 3 [Fall 1998], 120-21, 125). Certainly it has treated the women's movement and women's issues as "lifestyle" topics rather than news, and the gender of such subject matter may play a role in Baughman's conclusion, though he is also referring to increased coverage of the entertainment industry. This paper maintains that the magazine's political and rhetorical approaches have remained fairly consistent since the 1960s.

[11] Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), 69-70; James Carey, *Communication as Culture* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 43; S. Elizabeth Bird and Robert W. Dardenne, "Myth, Chronicle and Story: Exploring the Narrative Qualities of News," in *Media, Myths, and Narratives: Television and the Press*, ed. James W. Carey (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1988), 69.

[12] Catherine L. Covert, "Journalism History and Women's Experience: A Problem in Conceptual Change," *Journalism History* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1981), 6.

[13] Hegemony theory was articulated by Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci in *Selections from Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Georffrey Nowell-Smith (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 80, 182. Gramsci refined Marxist theory by contending that the consent of a

populace is not enforced by some monolithic power; rather, the widespread acceptance of certain ideas and conditions seems to be a choice freely made by the majority of people in a society.

[14] Faludi, *Backlash*, xxii.

[15] Jean Ward, "Talking (Fairly) About the World--A Reprise on Journalistic Language," *Media Studies Journal* 7, no. 2 (Winter-Spring 1993), 183-96.

[16] Since in the 1960s and early 1970s there was no single term for the women's movement, the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, though consulted, was less than helpful in identifying these stories--especially those in the second category, articles about "other" topics that were really about the movement. The cover stories analyzed in this study, therefore, were found through an examination of every issue of the magazine published from 1960 to the present.

[17] Cover, "A Letter from the Publisher," and "The New Feminists: Revolt Against 'Sexism,'" *Time* (21 November 1969), 1, 53-56.

[18] "Who's Come a Long Way, Baby?" *Time* (31 August 1970), 16-21; "The Liberation of Kate Millett," 18-19; "An Unchauvinist Male Replies," 21; Gloria Steinem, "What It Would Be Like If Women Win," 22-23.

[19] *Time: Special Issue: The American Woman* (20 March 1972) [entire issue].

[20] The editors felt compelled, however, to include another article listing "The Men Who Almost Made It" and explaining that a year of "worldwide recession" and "terrorism" "was not a period in which a single Man of the Year could decisively emerge" (*Time: Women of the Year*, 22).

[21] "Women of the Year: Great Changes, New Chances, Tough Choices," *Time: Women of the Year*, 6, 7, 15, 16.

[22] Cover and "What Next for U. S. Women," *Time* (5 December 1977), 18-26; cover, "A Letter from the Publisher," and "How Long Till Equality?" *Time* (12 July 1982), 1, 20, 22.

[23] Cover, table of contents page, and Claudia Wallis, "Onward, Women!," *Time* (4 December 1989), 80-89.

[24] "From the Managing Editor" and "The Dreams of Youth," *Time: Special Issue: Women: The Road Ahead*, 4, 10-14; Sears advertisements, 25, 27, 41. Ironically, the cover story was followed by a one-page essay from feminist writer Barbara Ehrenreich, who reiterated "the exhaustion factor" of the previous generation of women yet also noted that "every Out group carries with it a critical perspective, forged in the painful experiences of rejection and marginalization. When that perspective is lost or forgotten, a movement stands in danger of degenerating into a scramble for personal advancement. We applaud the winners and pray that their numbers increase, but the majority will still be found far outside the gates of privilege, waiting for the movement to start up again" ("Sorry, Sisters, This Is Not the Revolution," 15).

[25] Nancy Gibbs, "The War Against Feminism," *Time* (9 March 1992), 50-55.

[26] Bellafante, "Feminism: It's All about Me!" and Nadya Labi, "Girl Power," *Time* (29 June 1998), 54-60, 60-62.

[27] *Time* (4 June 1984, 23 July 1984, and 10 May 1993).

[28] Ralph P. Davidson, "A Letter from the Publisher," Timothy Foote, "The New Housewife Blues," and Lance Morrow, "Goodbye to 'Our Mary,'" *Time* (14 March 1977), 62-70, 37.

[29] "Abortion: The Battle of 'Life' vs. 'Choice,'" *Time* (6 April 1981); "Abortion: Will the Court Turn Back the Clock?," *Time* (1 May 1989); "Abortion's Most Wrenching Questions," *Time* (9 July 1990); "Why Roe v. Wade Is Already Moot," *Time* (4 May 1992); "The Pill that Changes Everything" [about the "abortion pill," RU 486], *Time* (14 June 1993).

[30] "Private Violence: Child Abuse, Wife Beating, Rape," *Time* (5 September 1983); "Date Rape," *Time* (3 June 1991); "Fighting Back," *Time* (18 January 1993); "Sex for Sale," *Time* (21 June 1993); and "When Violence Hits Home," *Time* (4 July 1994).

[31] "Sex in the '80s: The Revolution Is Over," *Time* (9April 1984); Claudia Wallis, "Back Off, Buddy," *Time* (12 October 1987), 68.

[32] Cover, John A. Meyers, "A Letter from the Publisher," and J. D. Reed, "The New Baby Bloom," *Time* (22 February 1982), 3, 52-58. The article's anecdotes, however, were entirely confined to Hollywood actresses and high-profile New York City professionals. A decade later, the magazine published a cover story on fatherhood (as a new phenomenon) as well (*Time* [28 June 1993]).

[33] Cover and Claudia Wallis, "The Child-Care Dilemma," *Time* (22 June 1987), 54-60; Nancy Gibbs, "The Baby Chase," *Time* (9 October 1989), 86. The magazine's white, middle-class perspective on this "flattened supply" perhaps partly accounted for a later cover story that chastised welfare mothers for the illegitimacy of their children (*Time* [2 June 1994]).

[34] *Time* (21 October 1991); cover, Richard Schickel, "Gender Bender" and Margaret Carlson, "Is This What Feminism Is All About?," *Time* (24 June 1991), 52-56,.57.

[35] *Time* (14 February 1994 and 27 February 1995).

[36] "The New Woman, 1972," *Time: Special Issue: The American Woman*, 25; "A Letter from the Publisher," *Time* (31 August 1970), 1; "Who's Come a Long Way, Baby?," 16; "How Long Till Equality?," 24. Through the early 1970s, this masculine point of view was symbolically reinforced by the fact that the publisher's letter continued to be signed with the name of the magazine's founder, Henry Luce, who had died in 1967.

[37] Table of contents page and Bellafante, "Feminism: It's All about Me!," *Time* (29 June 1998), 59; cover, *Time* (31 August 1970); "The New Woman, 1972," 25; "Women of the Year," 14.

[38] "What Next for U. S. Women," 20, cover.

[39] "A Gallery of American Women," *Time: Special Issue: The American Woman*, 30-31.

[40] Robert L. Miller, "A Letter from the Publisher," *Time* (12 October 1987), n. p.; Gibbs, "The War Against Feminism," 51.

[41] "Who's Come a Long Way, Baby?" and Martha Duffy, "Books: An Irate Accent," *Time: Special Issue: The American Woman*, 16, 98-99.

[42] "The New Feminism on Main Street," *Time: Special Issue: The American Woman*, 32.

[43] "Who's Come a Long Way, Baby?," 16-17; "What Next for U. S. Women," 19, 22, 25.

[44] "How Long Till Equality?," 21; "Onward, Women!," 81.

[45] "Who's Come a Long Way, Baby?," 17; "Women of the Year," 7; "What Next for U. S. Women," 22.

[46] "Who's Come a Long Way, Baby?," 17.

[47] Joelle Attinger, "Steinem: Tying Politics to the Personal" and Gibbs, "The War Against Feminism," *Time* (9 March 1992), 55.

[48] Wendy Cole, "To Each Her Own" and Janice Castro, "Get Set: Here They Come!" *Time: Special Issue: Women: the Road Ahead*, 46-49, 50-52.

[49] "Women of the Year," 8; "Patients' Prejudice" and "Slow Gains at Work," *Time: Special Issue: The American Woman*, 38, 88-89, 80.

[50] Gibbs, "The War Against Feminism," 54.

[51] "Women of the Year," 14, 16.

[52] "An Unchauvinist Male Replies," 21; "Where She Is and Where She's Going," *Time: Special Issue: The American Woman*, 27; Wallis, "Back Off, Buddy," 72; "Who's Come a Long Way, Baby?," 20.

[53] Sam Allis, "What Do Men Really Want?," *Time: Special Issue: The American Woman*, 80, 81.

[54] "Women's Liberation Revisited" and Charlene Murphy, Auburn, Wash., "Letters," *Time: Special Issue: The American Woman*, 30, 11.

[55] "Women of the Year," 15; "A Dozen Who Made a Difference" [sidebar], 20.

[56] Wallis, "Back Off, Buddy," 73.

[57] "Onward, Women!," 82, 85-86.

[58] Davis, *Moving the Mountain*, 492.

The Women's Suffrage Movement Through the Eyes of *Life* Magazine Cartoons

by

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Abstract

This article explored how cartoons in the humor magazine *Life* reflect suffragist and antisuffragist ideologies during the women's suffrage movement and why certain suffragist and/or antisuffragist ideologies were reflected and others ignored. Finally, it looked at what the implications of the cartoons may be. In investigating these questions, this study incorporated the theoretical framework of cultural studies and used ideological criticism as its methodology. The analysis revealed that more than 80 percent of the cartoons reflected antisuffragist ideologies. Thus, these cartoons clearly support the dominant ideology during this era. Moreover, the prevalence of cartoons mirroring antisuffragist ideologies suggests that the dominant ideology is continually renewed, reinforced, defended, and constructed, which is required for an ideology to maintain dominance (Foss, 1996, p.295).

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The beginning of the nineteenth century marked a massive change in the economic and social order of the United States. The country moved from a home-based economy in which both men and women worked inside the home to a market-based economy in which the men left the home to work in the burgeoning manufacturing industry while the women stayed at home to tend the household. Because men and women's economic roles and work spheres splintered, the social order was changed. Home was now a place of leisure and family. Women became economically dependent on men and took the primary role in raising the children[1].

By end of the nineteenth century, the separation of the spheres was in full force. With women's sphere being the home, they were isolated from most political, intellectual, and social life. Although their political role was greatly limited, affluent, white women found an opportunity to express themselves through the various women's clubs that supported suffrage and through the ideology of the republican mother[2]. Using the argument that motherhood gave them a special moral responsibility, and therefore, they should have a larger role in setting public policy, women's suffrage organizations greatly excelerated their activity and membership during this period[3]. From 1870-1910, 480 campaigns were conducted in 33 states (Flexner, 1975). Membership in the National American Women Suffrage Association increased from 13,150 in 1893, to more than 75,000 in 1910 (Kraditor, 1981).

Coinciding with the increase in women's agitation for suffrage was the rise of American humor magazines including the three largest, *Puck*, *Judge*, and *Life*. These humor magazines "were read and widely quoted, and they popularized humor to such an extent that many other periodicals found it advisable to maintain departments consisting entirely of original humorous matter" ("Century of American Humor," 1901, p. 490). Due to breakthroughs in printing

[1] Works that address the separation of the spheres include Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1989); Louise Michelle Newman, *Laying Claim to Difference: Ideologies of Race and Gender in the United States Woman s Movement, 1870-1920*, Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Brown University (1992).

[2] A romanticism of domestic duties and motherhood where women s patriotic duty was to educate their sons to be virtuous citizens.

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techniques after the Civil War, humor magazines were able to offer diverse cartoons (Sloane, 1987, p. xxvii). The humor magazines and their cartoons are particularly interesting sources to use in studying an era because they are "...an index of the state of affairs in any given society" (Boskin, 1979, p. 11), and they "...portray social trends, reflect attitudes, and reproduce phases of universal culture" (Meyer et al., 1980, p. 21).

By examining the cartoons found in humor magazines, one may better understand the role of cartoons in reinforcing political, cultural, social, and gender ideologies at the turn of the century. The purpose of this paper, then, is to explore how cartoons in the humor magazine *Life* reflect suffragist and antisuffragist ideologies during the women's suffrage movement. Furthermore, this paper will argue why certain suffragist and/or antisuffragist ideologies were reflected and others ignored as well as on what the implications of the cartoons may be.

In investigating these questions, this study incorporates the theoretical framework of cultural studies. Cultural studies situate media as molding people's ideas of themselves and the world (Cramer, 1998, p. 3). Key to cultural studies is Gramsci's notion of hegemony. Hegemony refers to the naturalization of the Establishment's values and ideas to form a kind of accepted social order (McQuail, 1983; Kellner, 1995). Because hegemony wants to reproduce itself and maintain the ruling class's power, it "...tends to define unacceptable opposition to the status quo as dissident and deviant" (McQuail, 1983, p. 99). However, challenges to the ruling class occur, which is known as counter-hegemony, because hegemony cannot simply be imposed on society (Kellner, 1995; Lindlof, 1995, p. 53). When the majority embraces these challenges, a new social order is often formed.

To place suffragist and antisuffragist arguments in context, it is necessary to look at an abridged history of the suffragist and antisuffragist movements.

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[3] Works that address the women s political role and the Republican Motherhood ideology include Sara M. Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1989); Anne F. and Andrew M. Scott, *One Half the People: The Fight for Woman Suffrage* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1975).

The Suffrage and Antisuffrage Movement at the Turn of the Century

Historians cite the 1848 Seneca Falls meeting as the beginning of the women's suffrage movement because part of these women's proposed reforms were the demand for the vote. Although there were many women's rights conventions after the initial Seneca Falls meeting, these women's activities were interrupted by the Civil War. Following the war, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which among other things gave African-American males suffrage, became a fundamental aspect of the suffragists' debates. Due to fights over whether the amendments should be defeated and whether they should seek suffrage on a federal versus a state level, the suffragists split into two organization in 1869—the National Woman Suffrage Association led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony and the American Woman Suffrage Association led by Lucy Stone (Scott & Scott, 1975; Kraditor, 1981).

By 1890, many of the suffrage pioneers had died or retired; therefore, a new generation of leaders took over the two organizations. These new leaders no longer saw the need for separate organizations, so they merged the two factions into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) (Scott & Scott, 1975; Kraditor, 1981). NAWSA was able to gain full women's suffrage in Colorado, Utah, and Idaho between 1890 and 1896. Although suffragists mounted hundreds of state campaigns for state suffrage and 19 national campaigns from 1896 to 1910, suffragists were unable to win the vote in any additional states or receive genuine support for a federal amendment (Flexner, 1975; Kraditor, 1981). Therefore, many historians refer to these years as the "doldrums" of the movement (Scott & Scott, 1975; Kraditor, 1981; Simon & Danziger, 1991).

Despite the suffragists problems winning support, their agitation was enough of a threat to motivate the opposition's organization (Scott & Scott, 1975, p. 25). Beginning in the 1870s with the founding of the first state antisuffrage group, the antisuffrage movement grew rapidly and reached its peak of power and influence between 1895 and 1907—the doldrum years for the

suffragists (Scott & Scott, 1975; Camhi, 1994, p. 2). Finally in 1911, a national organization, National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage (NAOWS), was formed. Unlike NAWSA, who continually campaigned all over the country for their cause, NAOWS actively campaigned only when specific types of situations arose in specific areas of the country (Camhi, 1994). For example, antisuffragists would rush to a state that was holding a referendum on women's suffrage.

Besides antisuffrage organizations, various economic groups such as brewers and textile manufacturers organized to oppose suffrage in state referenda (Scott & Scott, 1975, p. 25). These groups were concerned with what women might do with the vote including outlawing alcohol and child labor.

The antisuffrage movement began to weaken around 1910, while the suffrage movement strengthened due, in part, to changes in women's place in society. Recent household inventions and declining birthrates gave women more time for outside activities. More women were attending college. There was an increase in the numbers of women factory workers. These women began to organize and saw the ballot as a way to improve their bargaining power (Scott & Scott, 1975; Kraditor, 1981). "Economic and social changes were drawing the spheres of men and women together; women's political status changed accordingly" (Kraditor, 1981, p. 6).

The change in women's political status and the suffragists' efforts throughout the country helped women gain the vote in Washington in 1910. In the following two years, California, Oregon, Kansas, and Arizona enfranchised women. In 1917, New York approved a constitutional amendment for full women's suffrage. Congress passed the constitutional amendment two years later, and all the states ratified it in 1920 (Kraditor, 1981; Scott & Scott, 1975; Simon & Danziger, 1991).

Arguments of the Suffragists and Antisuffragists

Throughout the fight over women's suffrage, both sides used various arguments to support their position. From 1890-1920, suffrage and antisuffrage arguments fall into six general

categories—religion, biological/anthropological, sociological, race/ethnicity, women not wanting the vote, and its relationship with other "isms."

Regarding the religious reasoning, antisuffragists often evoked the chapter of Genesis. They used the version of creation in which Eve was created from Adam's rib. Antisuffragists said this story showed men were meant to be the superior being since they were created first (Kraditor, 1981). Related to the rib story, the antisuffragists used God's statement to Eve that her husband was to rule over her (Kraditor, 1981). Therefore, the antisuffragists argued that women's suffrage was going against the will of God ("The Argument Against Woman Suffrage," 1913).

In response to these arguments, suffragists used several tactics. First, they would show the contradictions in the creation stories as well as citing the rib story as "a petty surgical operation" (Stanton, 1895, p 20). They addressed God's statement that the husband was to rule over the wife by citing other places in the Bible where women were equal to men or women acted in heroic ways (Kraditor, 1981).

Aside from the creation story, antisuffragists used St. Paul's statement that women were not to speak in church (Kraditor, 1981). They said this statement showed women were meant to be men's subordinate and did not have a voice in public areas. Suffragists responded by stating there was an error in translation of St. Paul's statement. Translators used the word "speak" rather than "babble." Thus, St. Paul was showing his dislike at Corinthian women's tendency to gossip during church rather than stating women were not allowed a public voice (Kraditor, 1981). In addition, the suffragists argued that St. Paul was only stating his opinion and not God's wishes (Kraditor, 1981).

The second form of debate used was biological, which either consisted of women's physical or mental nature. In terms of the physical arguments, antisuffragists insisted that the right to vote is based on physical strength since one must have the power to enforce the laws. Men voted because they had the strength to enforce the laws and to go to war for their country's

rights (Blackwell, 1895; Putnam-Jacobi, 1894; Cooper, 1890; Abbott, 1903). Furthermore, women's health was too delicate to withstand the mental strain and physical exertion caused by political life (Kraditor, 1981; Camhi, 1994). In fact, some antisuffragists argued that voting would place such a strain on women that they were apt to go insane (Camhi, 1994).

Based on these premises, then, suffragists said only men capable of entering military service should be allowed to vote. However, this was clearly not true. Elderly and feeble men were allowed to vote even though they did not have the physical strength to withstand the exertion or defend the country (Blackwell, 1895). In addition, some men were prevented from voting due to illiteracy (Blackwell, 1895); therefore, this point was dubious.

Antisuffragists also argued that voting would cause women's sexual degeneration. According to neurophysiologists such as Charles Dana, women's sex organs would atrophy causing women to become men, and thus, they would no longer desire being a wife and mother (Camhi, 1994). With women becoming men and the separate spheres merging, antisuffragists expressed concerns that women's voting meant an end to progress and racial suicide (Benjamin, 1991; George, 1913; Camhi, 1994).

Besides the physical arguments, antisuffragists also used mental arguments claiming that women were too emotional, illogical, and irrational to vote (Kraditor, 1981; Moody, 1898; Collins, 1912). "Woman is impulsive; she does not inform herself; she does not study; she does not consider the consequences of a vote. In her haste to remedy one wrong she opens the way to many. The ballot in her hands is a dangerous thing" (Bock, 1913, p. 3).

Suffragists' response to women being too emotional and illogical to vote was two-fold. First, they provided illustrations of men's irrationality and emotionalism. For example, in a series of *Woman's Journal* articles, Alice Stone Blackwell cited the riots in the French Chamber of Deputies, fistfights in the House of Commons, and beard-pulling in the Nebraska Senate as cases of men's irrational behavior (Blackwell in Kraditor, 1981). In addition, suffragists compared men's "political" behavior to women's "political" behavior. Anna Howard Shaw used

examples of men screaming at each other and knocking off each others hats during political conventions and stated women would never act in such outlandish manners (Shaw in Kraditor, 1981). As for the argument that women were mentally inferior, suffragists pointed out that women did not have the intellectual training that men had so it would be unjust to compare the two sexes' intellect (Kraditor, 1981).

Beyond the biological/anthropological arguments, suffragists based their right to vote on sociology. Suffragists cited they had a natural right to suffrage that was the same as men's—the want and competence for self-government and self-protection (Stanton, 1889). Because both wanted and were capable of self-government, then the principles of the Declaration of Independence must apply to women as well (Kraditor, 1981, p. 49). Furthermore, suffragists pointed out that woman had the ballot under the colonial constitutions (Stanton, 1889).

In response to the natural rights argument, antisuffragists said a review of U.S. history made it clear that the Founding Fathers saw voting as an inalienable right for men only (Harper, 1906). Therefore, the suffragists interpreted natural rights and the Declaration of Independence principles incorrectly.

Antisuffragists also used the natural rights thesis. They said "women should remain in the sphere naturally and divinely marked out for them," and voting was not a part of their customary or natural sphere (Kraditor, 1981, p. 51). However, suffragists twisted this point and questioned whether women had yet found their "natural" sphere. They suggested that women should be allowed to discover if their sphere was indeed natural (Kraditor, 1981).

Associated with natural rights, suffragists claimed they were being taxed without representation and, consequently, they needed the ballot for self-protection. Because more women were wage earners, NAWSA conventioneers said working class women needed the vote to protect their interests and increase their bargaining power (Kraditor, 1981; Stanton, 1882). They argued that their wages were low because wages are dependent on one's position in society. With women being politically inferior to men, working women cannot compete with

voting men (Kelley, 1898). "By impairing her standing in the community the general rating of her value as a human being, and consequently as a worker, is lowered" (Kelley, 1898, p. 368). Moreover, if women are injured at work or become unemployed, they cannot protect their interests without the vote and are often forced into prostitution (Lowe, 1912).

Antisuffragists countered the taxation without representation and self-protection justification in four ways. First, they showed that few women pay taxes. Second, the colonists cry of taxation without representation was related to their desire for national representation and not representation of each individual citizen (Benjamin, 1991). Also, men already indirectly represent women's interests, and "men cannot misrepresent women's interests without misrepresenting their own" (Benjamin, 1991, p. 200). Furthermore, women already had great influence over men through the home and raising their sons (Scott & Scott, 1975). Suffragists countered this last argument in terms of working women. Because working women live by themselves, they are not represented by their fathers, brother, and husbands (Lowe, 1912). Finally, antisuffragists cited women's advancing condition without the vote such as securing the first tenement house laws, the establishment of kindergartensand detention homes, and aiding in the passage of pure food laws (Camhi, 1994).

Besides self-protection, suffragists contended that women's moral superiority would prevent political corruption and boast men's moral development (Kraditor, 1981; Stetson, 1896; Spencer, 1898). Moreover, women's morality would help with the government taking on new educative and charitable roles such as treatment of the insane, social welfare, and securing better moral and sanitary conditions (Spencer, 1898).

Antisuffragists refuted the argument by citing instances of women's immorality. For example, they showed how women bribed men with gifts in order to vote on their behalf (Winston, 1896). Moreover, they used history to show the immoral acts women did when they had political power such as Catherine de Medici giving the order to massacre St. Bartholomew and the women who ruled in Louis XV court doing nothing to help the poor (Benjamin, 1991).

Another antisuffragist tactic was to show what conditions occurred because of women gaining the vote in certain states. Politicians just as corrupt, women had not voted to better women's working conditions, no legislation to help children (Camhi, 1994). Antisuffragists also contended that it was women's fault if men in politics were corrupt because women's duty as mothers was to instill morality into their sons (Camhi, 1994).

In addition to superior morality, suffragists insisted that the vote would help them in their roles as wives and mothers. Mothers needed the vote and the knowledge of the inner workings of the government in order to make their children "loyal and patriotic citizens" (Drukker, 1897, p. 260). Without the vote, women "...cannot possibly be capable of transmitting the enlightened ideas, the breadth of vision, the power of calm judgment, which come with the exercise of this civic function in a free government" (Drukker, 1897, p. 260). Furthermore, suffragists said the vote would help them protect the home from immorality (Winston, 1896).

Antisuffragists met suffragists' arguments in several manners. First, they stated that women's voting would lead to the destruction of the home and family as institution, which is already disintegrating with the blurring of the spheres (Collins, 1912; Gibbons, 1902). They supported their affirmation by comparing divorce rates in suffrage versus non-suffrage states (Thompson, 1900; Benjamin, 1991). Moreover, they claim that men do immoral things and children are left motherless when women are not participating in politics (Tarbell 1912). As for the vote helping women protect the home, antisuffragists said women protect the home by molding children who will not become immoral once they grow up (Winston, 1896). Finally, antisuffragists point out that with equality of the sexes women will have to go to war and sacrifice chivalry (Ramee, 1909; Winston, 1896).

Related to improving women's roles in the household, suffragists said they needed the vote to repair urban morass—unsanitary conditions, juvenile crime, poor working conditions, crowding, prostitution, and drunkenness. Because women are trained in the fine art of housekeeping and men are not, women are the only ones who will be able to clean it up

(Addams, 1906). "The very multifariousness and complexity of a city government demand the help of minds accustomed to detail and variety of work, to a sense of obligation for the health and welfare of young children and to a responsibility for the cleanliness and comfort of other people" (Addams, 1906, p. 371).

The final sociological argument, which was antisuffrage argument, was voting created mannish, unattractive women (Benjamin, 1991; "The Argument Against Woman Suffrage," 1913; "The Present Legal Rights of Women," 1890). Therefore, many descriptions of typical suffragists called them "two-thirds men" or "biologically belonging to neither sex" (Benjamin, 1991, p. 82). Because these women were mannish, antisuffragists urged men not to marry these types of women ("The Argument Against Woman Suffrage," 1913).

Beyond the sociological justifications, suffragists were fond of using African Americans and foreigners as reasons why women should vote. With the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment, suffragists argued that they were now politically inferior to the former slaves (Kraditor, 1981). Because of the large number of African-American males, suffragists said they should be allowed to vote in order to maintain racial supremacy (Kraditor, 1981; Scott & Scott, 1975). In regards to foreigners, suffragist point out that more foreigners vote in many states than Americans (Brown, 1889). According to suffragists, the foreigners' votes were dangerous because most foreigners were Catholic and would attempt to overpower American Protestant votes and most were illiterate, which placed "an impoverished and ignorant balance of power in the hands of wily politicians" (Stanton, 1902, p. 347; Brown, 1889). Since there are three times as many literate, American-born women, women's votes would outnumber the negative influences of the foreigners' votes (Brown, 1889). Another controversial solution to the foreign and African-American vote that only some suffragists supported was to impose a literacy test on voters (Stanton, 1902; Kraditor, 1981).

Refuting the suffragist arguments, antisuffragist cited that women's voting hurt white supremacy because African-American women would be able to vote as well (Benjamin, 1991).

Some suffragists refuted other suffragists' argument. Harriet Stanton Blatch pointed out that the foreign working class are important voters for their knowledge of urban conditions and possible ability to remedy it (Blatch, 1897).

Besides race/ethnicity, a popular antisuffrage theme was most women did not want the vote (Collins, 1912; Benjamin, 1991). Often, antisuffragists used statistics to support this argument. For example, the Massachusetts Association Opposed to the Further Extension of Suffrage to Women said "only 22,204 women, out of a possible 575,000 qualified to register and vote, voted in favor of municipal suffrage" (Benjamin, 1991, p. 4). Therefore, most women were indifferent to voting, and "it would be unjust to impose the burdens of government on women at the request of a comparatively few women without first ascertaining that the majority of women consent to assume them" (Benjamin, 1991, p. 5).

In addition to women not wanting to vote, antisuffragists equated suffrage with other radical movements such as bolshevism, feminism, and socialism. Typical of this argument, an annual report of the Illinois Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage called suffrage a European import, "an offshoot of the rising agitation for Communism and Socialism. (Camhi, 1994, p. 70) "It has been agitated in the East by a growing number of radicals often with atheistic tendencies" (Camhi, 1994, p. 70). Moreover, antisuffragists stated women's suffrage was "the Socialist's most important tenet" (Camhi, 1994, p. 71). Suffragists did not answer these accusations. Instead they said they welcomed socialist votes and socialist funds (Camhi, 1994).

In summation, suffrage and antisuffrage justifications fell into six categories. Antisuffrage arguments tended to use religion, biology, women not wanting the vote, and suffragists' relationship with other "isms." In addition, they used one sociological justification—suffrage created mannish women. On the other hand, most of the suffragists' contentions were sociological including working women, women's superior morality, role as mother, self-protection, taxation without representation, and natural rights, or they used race/ethnicity.

Why Analyze Cartoons?

Cartoons are a socially significant part of many cultures including early 20th century American culture. These cartoons "...captured the age and chronicled its transformation..." (Sloane, 1987, p. xxv). Cartoons and humor in general reflected "the inner mechanisms and energies of society. [They] classified and distinguished, separated and integrated, and served as a unifying fulcrum" (Boskin, 1979, p. 11). Furthermore, the humor magazine cartoons were filled with social commentary (Sloan, 1987) and, therefore, are a valuable resource in determining cultural, social, and gender ideologies.

Aside from their social significance, cartoons and humor magazines were influential in the early 1900s. These magazines and their cartoons sought to influence public opinion (Fischer, 1996; Maurice & Cooper, 1970). Furthermore, humor magazines and the numerous cartoons in them were extremely popular, widely read, and widely quoted ("Century of American Humor," 1901). Because they were popular and widely read, it is likely that the cartoons did affect public opinion.

Method

In exploring the research question, how cartoons in the humor magazine *Life* reflect suffragist and antisuffragist ideologies during the women's suffrage movement, the author looked through every *Life* magazine issue from January 1909 to December 1914 and collected every cartoon that referred to women's suffrage. Thus, this analysis is based on 214 cartoons. Regarding the time period, I chose it for two reasons. First, there were no suffrage cartoons prior to 1909. Second, World War I began in the summer of 1914 and the war began to dominate cartoons by 1915. Therefore, the end of 1914 seemed like an appropriate end point for the sample.

Life magazine was chosen over *Judge* and *Puck*, its counterparts, for three reasons. First, *Puck*'s influence and circulation began to decline during the 1890s, whereas both *Life* and *Judge*'s were increasing (Sloane, 1987; Peterson, 1964). Second, magazine historians cite *Life*

as one of the most influential. "It ultimately succeeded so well that it became the most influential cartoon and literary humor magazine of its time, and...served as the model for another humor magazine, *The New Yorker*" (Sloane, 1987, p. 142). *Life*'s peers support historians assertions. The editor of *Harper's Weekly*, George Harvey, called *Life* "...the most successful 10 cent weekly" (Horn, 1980, p. 743). Furthermore, *Life* began to publish viewpoints different from their editorial stance in the early 1900s; therefore, *Life* would probably have a wider range of societal views in its cartoons (Sloane, 1987).

Because the purpose of this research is to examine the role of *Life* cartoons in articulating and/or reinforcing suffrage and antisuffrage ideologies during the women's suffrage movement, and what the implications of these ideologies might be on public opinion, ideological criticism was used to interpret the cartoons. Ideological criticism is informed by several different perspectives and philosophies including Marxism, cultural studies, semiology, and feminism (Foss, 1996, p. 292). Its primary goal "...is to discover and make available the dominant ideology or ideologies embedded in an artifact and the ideologies that are being muted in it" (Foss, 1996, p. 295-296).

According to Foss (1996), there are three primary concerns involved in an ideological analysis—identification of the ideology's nature, the interests included, and the strategies that support the ideology. Based on these concerns, two questions will guide the interpretation: (1) what suffrage and antisuffrage ideologies are reflected in the cartoons, and (2) were there any additional themes reflected in the cartoons? These questions will be further illustrated by detailing examples of the various ideologies. After discovering the most prominent suffrage and antisuffrage arguments, this paper will address what the dominant ideology embodied in these cartoons is and what the implication of this ideology is.

In analyzing the ideologies reflected in the cartoons, the author examined all texts, the characters' facial expressions, postures, actions, and appearances, and the unfolding scene in general. The visuals were studied because they reflect shared values and ideologies (Wagner,

1979). In addition, their highly coded discourse seduces audiences into concurring with the producer's signification and induce the audience to agree with the ideological formation (McCracken, 1993). The author looked at all the texts because captions guide the reader toward the dominant system's preferred, coded meaning and away from alternative meanings (Barthes, 1977).

Analysis of Cartoons

This section begins with a general summary of findings and follows with detailed findings in the order of the research questions. Among the 214 cartoons, three of the six categories of suffrage and antisuffrage arguments were found—biology, sociology, and race/ethnicity—constituting almost 75 percent of the cartoons. The remaining cartoons showed suffragists as militant or going to jail, states that passed women's suffrage, the whole antisuffragist-versus-suffragist debate, the suffrage movement as silly or "just noise," positive depictions of the suffrage movement, or other (see Appendix A for breakdowns of the cartoons). Based on whose ideology the cartoon reflected, the vast majority (83 percent) support antisuffragist ideology. Only 10 percent bolstered suffragist ideology, and the remaining six percent bolstered both or neither group's ideology.

Regarding the biological argument, less than 10 percent of the cartoons reflected it, and only one reflected women's physical nature (see Appendix B). The physical cartoon showed women hurling objects at the court house and unable to break a window. This cartoon reflects the antisuffragist argument that women are physically inferior. Although this cartoon does not state that women's lack of physical strength precludes them from the vote, this argument is implicit considering society's knowledge of the suffragist and antisuffragist arguments at the time. Therefore, this cartoon reinforces the antisuffragist belief that the right to vote is based on physical strength since one must have the power to enforce the law. Because these women are throwing objects at a government building, moreover, this cartoon also depicts suffragists acting as militant.

Aside from the physical nature cartoon, cartoons reflecting biological arguments also depicted women as being emotionally fragile (see Appendix C). In this cartoon, two mice discuss going in and "busting up" a women's suffragist meeting. Obviously, this cartoon plays upon the myth that women are afraid of and overreact to the presence of rodents. Because the cartoon depicts women as emotional, it supports the antisuffragist belief that women would not be able to withstand the rigors of voting and would not be able to vote objectively.

Another popular biological type of cartoon reflected women's illogic and triviality by depicting their love for shopping and fashion (see Appendix D). In this example, women are shown rushing to the poll to vote and some carrying out packages. Signs in the windows include "special bargain" and "selling out." Although the selling out sign could be read as the "store" selling out of all their merchandise, it is likely that the sign had a double meaning. The sign also implies these women are betraying their sex, their role in society, their role as wives and mothers, and the human race because societal norms at the time dictated women's role was in the home and not in politics (Evans, 1989). When women left this sphere, antisuffragists believed that immorality raged, progress ended, and women became man-like and no longer married and had children causing racial suicide to ensue.

Although biological ideologies were reflected in the cartoons, most cartoons reflected sociological ideologies. The most common sociological argument tackled issues related to the separation of the spheres and constituted one-third of all the cartoons. Many cartoons reflected role reversals in which men were left to care for home and children while women participated in politics (see Appendix E). In this example from 1910, the cartoon depicts the "husbandette" in the kitchen washing dishes with his children standing along side. His wife is walking out the door to join a march, and one of the marchers has a sign reading, "Man is tyrant." This cartoon clearly supports the antisuffragist conclusion that women in politics continued to blur the spheres and eventually lead to the destruction of the home because family is built upon the separation of the spheres (Abbott, 1903; Collins, 1912). According to Camhi (1994), moreover, antisuffragists

believed that the family was the basic link to government. Without one head of household, anarchy would ensue.

Related to role reversal, another popular type of separation of spheres cartoon showed women's suffrage causing divorce (see Appendix F). Representative of this type of cartoon is a 1910 cartoon depicting a rooster and a hen. The rooster instructs his suffragette wife to "cut out all this suffragette nonsense and go home and set on those eggs or [he'll] get a divorce." Again, this cartoon represents antisuffragist sentiments because they argued that women's suffrage led to higher divorce rates (Thompson, 1900; Benjamin, 1991). Because the rooster is ordering the hen, it also reinforces men's dominance over women.

The third theme portrayed as the result of the spheres blurring was women taking over the power. For example, a 1913 cartoon shows a speaker asking those in favor of women's suffrage to raise their hand (see Appendix G). A woman raises her hand and her scared husband's hand. This cartoon also defends antisuffragist ideologies. Antisuffragist believed suffrage made men more woman-like (Benjamin, 1991). Furthermore, as men became more woman-like, antisuffragist thought this led to civilization's decadence (Benjamin, 1991, p. 81) and downfall.

Finally, a few separation of spheres cartoons characterized men's disenfranchisement by women (see Appendix H). For example, a 1909 cartoon shows a female police officer arresting a man carrying a "votes for men" sign. Behind the arrested man is a small group of men. One is orating, and another carries a "votes for men" flag. The crowd also includes a monkey pushing a baby carriage. Although neither suffragists nor antisuffragists argued that women would disenfranchise men, this cartoon better bolsters antisuffragist beliefs. Antisuffragists in particular feared that "men will gradually come under the power of women [if women's suffrage is passed], who will tyrannize over them and degrade them" ("The Present Legal Rights of Women," 1890, p. 28). The inclusion of the monkey further maintains antisuffragist ideology. Antisuffragists argued that the breakdown of the spheres was retrogressive (Camhi, 1994).

Therefore, it follows that antisuffragists would believe the breakdown of spheres also lead to man devolving to ape since Darwin's *Origin of Species* implied that man evolved from apes, and Darwin's theory had great influence over people in the early 1900s.

Besides separation of spheres issues, the sociological cartoons often revolved around marriage themes. The first marriage theme was that marriage was more desirable than suffrage as exemplified in this 1914 cartoon (see Appendix I). The cartoon depicts three circus tents—feminism, suffrage, and matrimony. Representatives from the feminist and suffragist tents are desperately trying to draw customers. The matrimony tent with a sign calling it "the big show" has a crowd around the entrance. The caption reads: "Only side shows after all." Explicit in this cartoon is that feminism and suffragism are lesser attractions for women, and therefore, women's main purpose in life is to marry and act as wife and mother. Clearly, these types of cartoons support the antisuffragist argument that marriage and family are women's true Natures (Abbott, 1903).

Other marriage themes stress the undesirability of marrying a suffragist (see Appendix J). An illustrative cartoon shows cupid stopping a group of suffragists. The caption reads: "The ban." This cartoon also sustains antisuffragist ideologies. Antisuffragists urged men not to marry suffragists because they "go against the will of God" by appropriating men's roles ("The Argument Against Woman Suffrage," 1913, p. 302).

Associated with marriage themes, several cartoons depicted suffragists as ignoring their home and children. For example, this 1912 cartoon shows a young girl asking her grandfather, "What's the news in the papers about mother?"(see Appendix K). Again, this defends antisuffragist beliefs that suffragists abandon their children in pursuit of politics and a life outside the home (Camhi, 1994).

In addition to ignoring children, many sociological contentions portrayed suffragists as unattractive (see Appendix L). An exemplar cartoon showed a suffragist with a large, hooked nose asking "The Bearded Lady" how she managed to grow a beard. A young girl points at the

two women while her father smirks. Because antisuffragists argued that suffragists were unattractive and mannish (Benjamin, 1991; "The Argument Against Woman Suffrage," 1913; "The Present Legal Rights of Women," 1890), these types of cartoons seem to support antisuffragist ideology. In addition, it is important to note that many of the cartoons from 1909-1914 depict suffragists as hag-like, old maids with glasses, or dowdy, fat women even though this study did not primarily categorize them under "unattractive" (Sheppard, 1985).

Sociological arguments represented in cartoons also included women's influence upon male voters (see Appendix M). In this particular example, a woman is shown kissing each man as they enter the polls. Although antisuffragists argued that women already had indirect political influence through their husbands and sons (Benjamin, 1991), they never explicitly stated that women's political influence involved women's sexuality. However, these cartoons seem to support antisuffragist arguments more than suffragist arguments. Suffragists claimed they had NO ability to influence politics, whereas antisuffragists claimed indirect influence, which kissing could be considered.

An additional sociological argument involved chivalry and women going to war. An example of this theme came from a 1910 cartoon depicting a group of hens boarding a train (see Appendix N). The hens with numerous packages look at the roosters who are not yielding their seats to the "ladies." The caption reads: "The march of the suffragettes. Recognition of the equality of the sexes has become quite general in public conveyances." Clearly, these types of cartoons sustain antisuffragists' contention that women's suffrage means women will have to sacrifice chivalry (Ramee, 1909; Winston, 1896).

Besides the chivalry argument, working women were cited as a reason for women's suffrage. A few cartoons depict working women fighting for the vote (see Appendix O). In one particular example, a group of women stand outside a polling place holding various types of signs. Men are allowing women to file in to vote. Because of the various signs in the crowd, it is hard to determine whose ideology this cartoon maintains. A group of women hold a sign

stating that they want their rights including higher wages and shorter hours. This part of the sign reflects suffragists' belief that working women needed the vote in order to protect their own interests (Kraditor, 1981; Stanton, 1882). However, the remainder of the aforementioned sign states that the women want fewer duties and every evening out. Furthermore, other signs say, "Keep the missus out of the kitchen" and " Force the upstairs girl to make the salad." Not only are these signs mocking the suffragists, but they also reflect antisuffragists' belief that women neglect their household duties when they are involved in politics (Benjamin, 1991). Thus, this cartoon seems to send mixed messages.

Another single example of a sociological argument portrays the taxation without representation debate (see Appendix P). This cartoon juxtaposes a 1776 patriot knocking out the monarchy with a 1913 suffragist knocking out a man. Both point to a "taxation without representation" sign, and the caption reads: "Sauce for the gander." This cartoon upholds the suffragist belief that women were unjustly being taxed without true representation (Kraditor, 1981). Furthermore, it refutes antisuffragists' claims that "taxation without representation" can only be applied in terms of national representation (Benjamin, 1991).

Aside from the "taxation without representation" justification, several cartoons reflected the morality debate. For example, this 1913 cartoons shows woman's vote creating a barrier between the idyllic city and the red-light district (see Appendix Q). Clearly, this cartoon sustains suffragist ideology that women's vote would bring morality into politics (Kraditor, 1981). In particular, suffragists believed their vote would prevent corruption, boast men's moral development, and help clean up immoral companies such as brothels (Kraditor 1981; Stetson, 1896; Spencer, 1898).

The final sociological argument reflected in the cartoons dealt with the opportunity equality of the sexes would bring to women. A representative cartoon from 1914 portrays a suffragist sleeping in her chair. She is dreaming about women becoming soldiers in the navy and army, Supreme Court Justices, firefighters, and police officers. Again, this supports suffragists.

Suffragists wanted the vote, in part, to open up opportunities to them (Kraditor, 1981). In addition, suffragists often cited the lack of equal opportunity for women as a reason why women may be seen as mentally or physically inferior (Kraditor, 1981).

Beyond the numerous sociological justifications, a few cartoons mirrored the race/ethnicity contention. For instance, this 1913 cartoon shows a variety of men casting their ballots. Among these are a foreign and an African-American man. The caption reads: "Woman is not fit for the ballot." This cartoon reflects two suffragist contentions. First, suffragist cited the injustice in African-American males being able to vote and women not being able to vote (Kraditor, 1981). Second, suffragists point out the unfairness of foreigners having suffrage when women are "true" citizens of this country (Brown, 1889). In addition, suffragist point to the undesirability of foreign voters because of foreigners' religion and illiteracy (Brown, 1889).

Although the vast majority of the cartoons reflected suffragist and antisuffragist ideologies, approximately 17 percent had other themes. Several cartoons depicted suffragists in a positive manner (see Appendix R for an example). These cartoons showed suffragists as generally feminine characters and women's suffrage as something to hope for. A couple of cartoons depicted the antisuffragist-suffragist debate (see Appendix S for an example). These cartoons clearly favored neither side, so they cannot be classified as bolstering either. A few cartoons also portrayed the states in which women's suffrage was passed or on which referenda were being voted (see Appendix T for an example). Although the example shows a female hunter killing two more rabbits with states names inscribed on them, all of these types of cartoons portray both sides in positive and negative ways.

Another theme not directly mirrored in antisuffragist and suffragist rhetoric was women's suffrage as being just silly or noise. For example, this 1910 cartoon depicts a parade of animals in female dress with signs requesting rights such as "Votes for dogs," and "Vivisection: Give us the ballot and we will stop it" (see Appendix U). The caption reads: "Why not." This cartoon mocks suffragist ideologies that women will be able to cure immorality with the vote and women

have a natural right to the vote (Kraditor, 1981; Stetson, 1896; Spencer, 1898). Because these cartoons depict women's voting as silly or "just noise," moreover, these cartoons seem to support antisuffragists more than suffragists by diminishing women's desires for equality.

Furthermore, 14 cartoons portray suffragists as militants. This 1913 example shows a group of women with a "united militants" sign in the theater manager's office (see Appendix V). The lead suffragist says, "Unless you agree to employ only our suffragette chorus girls, we will blow up your old theater." Clearly, militant illustrations injure the suffragists' cause. According to Flexner (1975), a few suffragists did use violent means such as breaking windows and attacking government members with whips, but these women were not part of the mainstream movement making a militant characterization unjust. Moreover, all the women in the cartoon are drawn as unattractive women with glasses; therefore, this characterization further advances antisuffragists' belief that suffrage makes women mannish (Benjamin, 1991; "The Argument Against Woman Suffrage," 1913; "The Present Legal Rights of Women," 1890).

The final non-suffragist/antisuffragist theme apparent in the cartoons links suffrage activities with going to jail. For instance, this 1913 cartoon depicts a suffragist in a jail cell (see Appendix W). Outside her cell are three suffragists hollering and creating a disturbance. The caption reads: A safe and sane Fourth. These cartoons tend to favor antisuffragists. They do not refer to whether or not the suffragists committed illegal acts, but by implication, suffragist activity is against the law and Natural Law. The fact that suffragists seem to desire jail time (a theme apparent in most of these types of cartoons) makes the women and their cause insane.

Ideology embodied and implications

Considering that more than 80 percent of the cartoons either reflect antisuffragist ideologies or favor the antisuffragist cause, these cartoons clearly support the dominant ideology during this era—separation of spheres, domesticity, Victorian values, and republican motherhood. Moreover, the prevalence of cartoons mirroring antisuffragist ideologies suggests

that the dominant ideology is continually renewed, reinforced, defended, and constructed, which is required for an ideology to maintain dominance (Foss, 1996, p. 295).

The nature, use, and purpose of humor further advances these contentions. Cartoons portray human attitudes and "...reflect basic social values with intense clarity" (Boskin, 1979, p. 7; Bogardus, 1945). Because the cartoons reflected antisuffragist ideologies, basic social values at this time would include maintaining separate spheres, women's submission to male authority, women's inferiority to men, and women's primary role as wife and mother. In addition, because these cartoons mocked suffragists more than antisuffragists and cartoons portray human attitudes, then, society as a whole had a negative attitude toward women's suffrage and a desire to maintain the status quo. Historians agree with this last point. "Throughout the country generally,...the [suffrage] movement was but a subject for ridicule" (Murrell, 1928, p. 18). When one ridicules and belittles one's opponents, one is attempting to secure domination and control. Since cartoons express this "wish for domination and control" (Bogardus, 1945, p. 141), one may conclude that *Life* was supporting hegemony.

Besides the nature of humor, the use and purpose of humor bolsters this paper's contention. Humor is used "as an essential form of social communication" (Boskin, 1979, p. 5). Because it "is integrally related to a culture's code," humor thrusts societal members toward social coherence and control (Boskin, 1979, p. 5). In addition, humor is often used against upwardly mobile minority groups such as suffragists (Boskin, 1979, p. 30). Through the mocking of social groups, humor conveys accepted behaviors and attitudes to society. Furthermore, when a social group threatens the dominant ideology, humor may be used to subvert their message. Because suffragists were going against the dominant ideology, suffrage cartoons subverted their message by reflecting antisuffragist ideologies in order to maintain the status quo. Therefore, humor functions as a corrective for societal outsiders, and humor "is tied to power, autonomy, and aggression..." (Walker, 1988, p. 13).

In addition to humor, exploring the cartoonists themselves bolster the contention that suffrage cartoons uphold the dominant ideology. Because most cartoonists were men, it follows that they would reveal men's view of women, which at this time was domestic, moral, submissive, motherly, chaste, and dependent (Franzen & Ethiel, 1988, p. 13; Evans, 1989). "Rarely did early cartoonists concern themselves with women's own feelings and desires—especially for equality. They were far more concerned with the threat these desires posed to their own comfortable way of life" (Franzen & Ethiel, 1988, p. 13). Therefore, male cartoonists mocked suffragists because women's suffrage threatened their position in society and the societal order.

Finally, the editorial content of *Life* supports the dominant ideology and antisuffragist ideologies. During most of 1909, most suffrage editorial both favored and disfavored women's suffrage. For example, *Life* ran an article that said they had read both sides' arguments "...and come usually to the conclusion that the strongest argument against it is 'Because,' and the strongest argument for it the same" (*Life*, p. 220)[4]. However, 1910 marked vehement antisuffrage editorial as exemplified by the birth of Priscilla Jawbones' weekly columns, which mocked suffragists and their ideologies, and their essay contest on why a man should not marry a suffragette. In addition, it is important to note the characterization of Priscilla Jawbones corresponds with antisuffragists' belief that suffragists are unattractive and mannish. She is depicted as a gap-toothed, old hag who wears glasses—the stereotype of a suffragist. The Jawbones column continued through 1911.

In 1912, Life again ran a contest, but this time they asked if a suffragette should marry. The winners answer to the question was "certainly not. A man's wife should be his ideal, not his ordeal" (p. 2192)[5]. After 1912, the editorial was mixed again, but more was antisuffragist than suffragist.

[4] From February 18, 1909 issue.
[5] From November 14, 1912 issue of *Life* magazine.

The implication of the cartoons bolstering dominant and antisuffragist ideology is that the cartoons, as part of a mainstream medium, may have negatively influenced public opinion toward the women's suffrage amendment. According to Maurice and Cooper (1970), the primary purpose of cartoons was to mold public opinion. Cartoons also sought "...to influence public opinion through its use of widely and instantly understood symbols, slogans, referents, and allusions" (Fischer, 1996, p. 122). Moreover, politicians abhorred cartoons because they were able to solidify complex issues into simple metaphor, were widely available, were able to depict issues in unflattering manners, and could be understood by the illiterate (Harrison, 1981, p. 14; Fischer, 1996). In fact Thomas Nast's cartoons of Boss Tweed helped sway public opinion and expel him from office (Fischer, 1996).

Conclusion

In summation, *Life* magazine cartoons reflected both suffrage and antisuffrage ideologies, but more than 80 percent reflected antisuffrage arguments. The two most prominent antisuffrage ideology mirrored in the cartoons were separation of spheres and marriage issues, and these ideologies were akin to the dominant ideology, which included separation of spheres, Victorian values, republican motherhood, and domesticity. Therefore, the prevalence of antisuffrage ideologies in the cartoons supports the dominant ideology and helps subvert suffragists' counter-hegemony.

The purpose, use, and nature of humor, the editorial content of *Life*, and the practices of male cartoonists further bolster the argument that *Life* suffrage cartoons supported antisuffrage ideologies and, more importantly, the dominant ideology. Furthermore, the reflection of antisuffrage ideologies and the dominant ideology in the cartoons may have negatively influenced public opinion toward the women's suffrage movement especially considering Life was "the most influential cartoon and literary humor magazine of its time" (Sloane, 1987, p. 142) and humor magazines "were read and widely quoted" ("Century of American Humor," 1901, p. 490).

Considering the findings of this study, there are two important implications. First, if these cartoons contributed to negative public opinion, then it also helped thwart the suffrage amendment from 1909-1914. This is supported even more when one looks at the *Life* cartoons from 1919-1920. The tone of the cartoons greatly changed, and more of the cartoons bolstered suffrage ideologies and depicted suffragists in a positive manner.

Finally, certain ideologies have changed little in 100 years. Media still subject women to the femininity myth. According to the contemporary femininity myth, women are self-sacrificing, self-denigrating (Jamieson, 1995), passive, dependent, nurturing, beautiful, and most importantly pure (Freidan, 1963). Because women are "naturally" the nurturers, the best place for them is at home as mother, wife, and housekeeper. With this debilitating myth still in place, women who go against this ideology such as feminists and politically powerful women are characterized as unattractive and half man-half woman (Wolf, 1991) just like antisuffragists depicted suffragists as mannish and unattractive.

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Appendix A

Argument	Number of Cartoons
Women physically and mentally inferior (Biological)	8
Women are trivial/shop for clothes (Bio)	10
Separation of spheres (Sociology)	64
Marriage (Soc)	27
Suffragists ignore their children (Soc)	6
Women's vote needed for morality (Soc)	3
Working women need the vote (Soc)	4
Women's influence on men—sexual (Soc)	4
Suffragists are mannish (Soc)	13
Equality of the sexes (Soc.)	3
Suffragists must give up chivalry and go to war (Soc)	9
Race/ethnicity	7
Antis vs. Suffragists	4
States that passed women's suffrage	4
Positive depictions women's suffrage	6
Suffragists as militant	14
Suffragism is silly or "just noise"	5
Suffragists going to jail	5
Other	18
Total	**214**

Appendix B

NEWS ITEM

AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE YESTERDAY BY SUFFRAGETTES TO DESTROY ONE OF THE WINDOWS IN THE COURT HOUSE.

From *Life* (1910 June 9), vol. 60 (1441), p. 1062.

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Appendix C

From *Life* (1913 February 13), vol. 64 (1581), p. 318.

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Appendix D

THE DAY THEY VOTE

From *Life* (1910 June 2), vol. 60 (1440), p. 1015.

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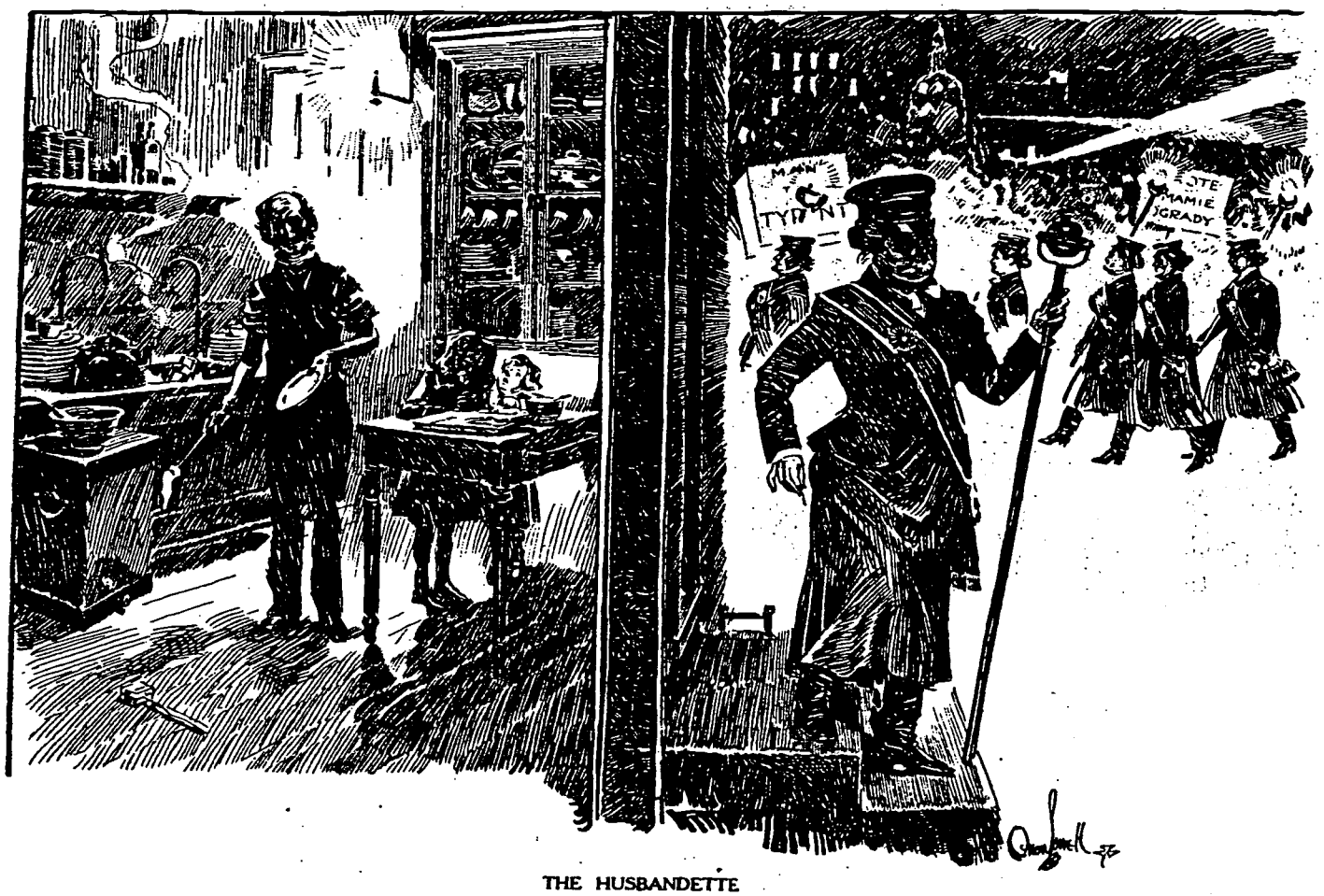
Appendix E



THE HUSBANDETTE

"MY GOODNESS, BUT I'LL BE GLAD WHEN ELECTION IS OVER"

From *Life* (1910 March 17), vol. 60 (1429).

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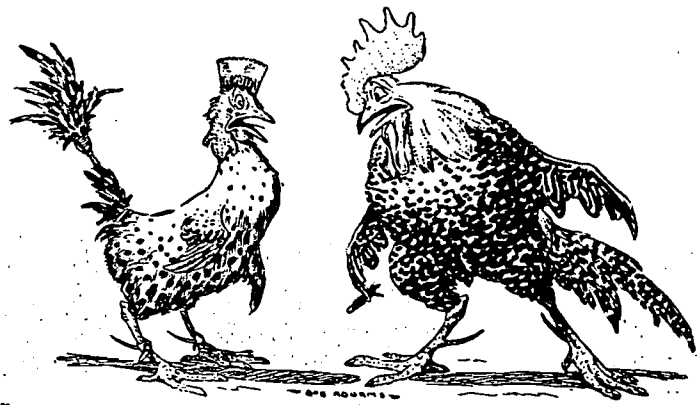
Appendix F



"CUT OUT ALL THIS SUFFRAGETTE NONSENSE AND GO HOME AND SET ON THOSE EGGS OR I'LL GET A DIVORCE."

From *Life* (1910 December 22), vol. 61 (1469), p. 1141.

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Appendix G

The Speaker: ALL THOSE IN FAVOR OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE HOLD UP THEIR HANDS

From *Life* (1913 December 25), vol. 65 (1626), p. 1141.

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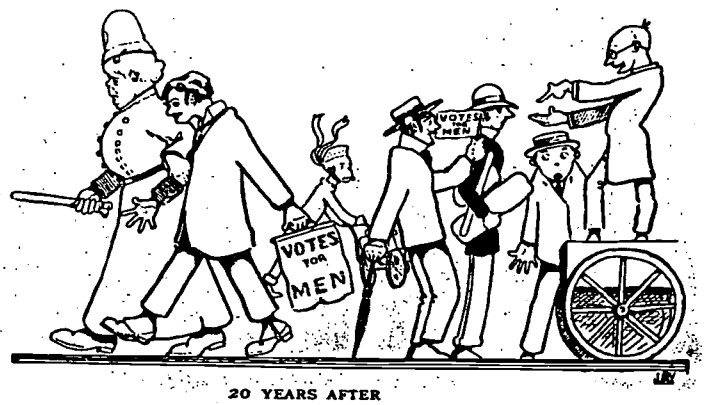
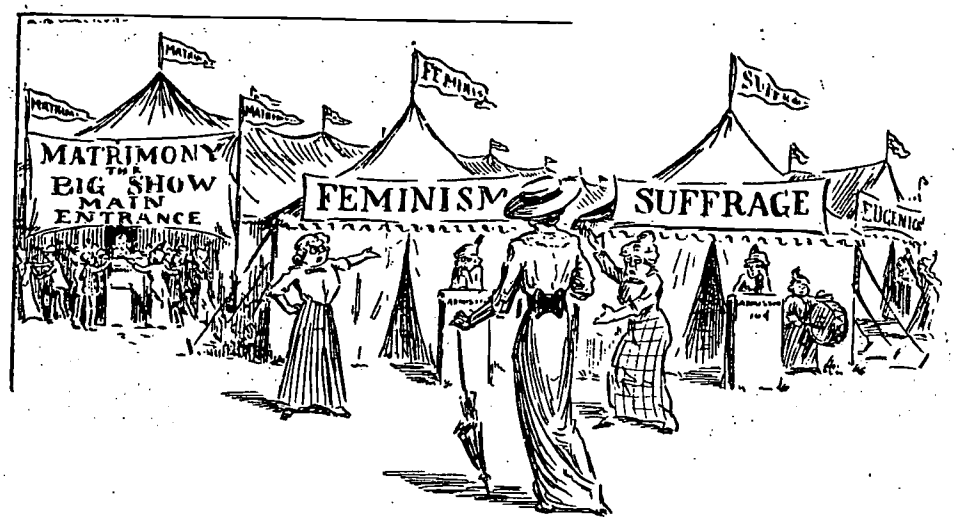
Appendix II



From *Life* (1909 March 25), vol. 58 (1378).

Appendix I



ONLY SIDE SHOWS AFTER ALL

From *Life* (1914 September 17), p. 476.

Appendix J

THE BAN

From *Life* (1910 September 22), vol. 61 (1456), p. 468.

Appendix K

IN THE HOME OF A SUFFRAGETTE

"SAY, GRANDPA, WHAT'S THE NEWS IN THE PAPERS ABOUT MOTHER?"

From *Life* (1912 April 4), vol. 64 (1536), p. 702.

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Appendix L

Suffragette: HOW DID YOU MANAGE IT?

From *Life* (1911 February 9), vol. 62 (1476), p. 315.

Appendix M

GETTING OUT THE EARLY VOTE

From *Life* (1914 May 21), vol. 68 (?), p. 914.

Appendix N

THE MARCH OF THE SUFFRAGETTES

RECOGNITION OF THE EQUALITY OF THE SEXES HAS BECOME QUITE GENERAL IN PUBLIC CONVEYANCES

From *Life* (1910 November 24), vol. 61 (1465), p. 918.

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Appendix O

From *Life* (1909 March 25), vol. 58 (1378), p. 402-403.

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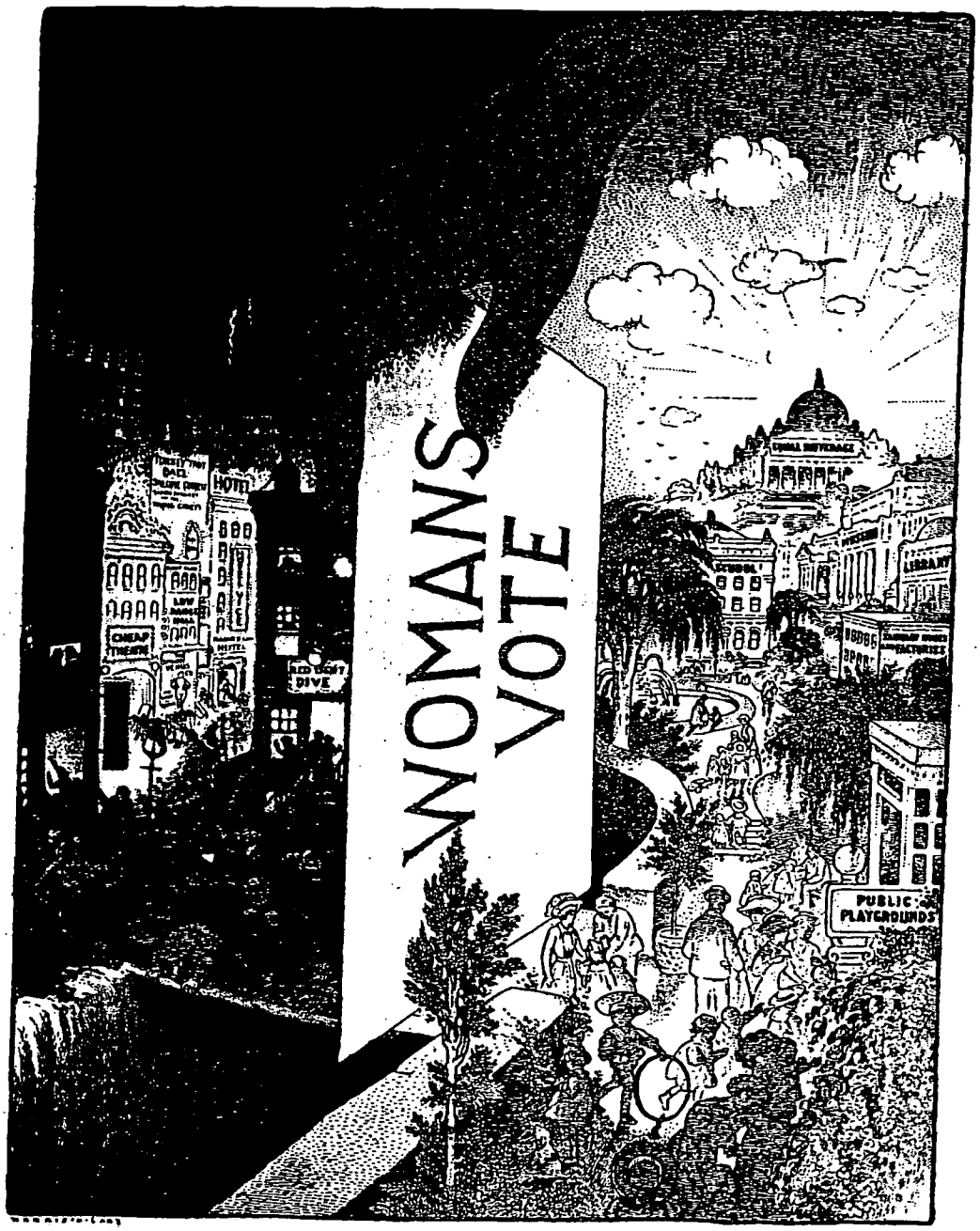
Appendix P

SAUCE FOR THE GANDER

From *Life* (1913 July 3), vol. 67 (1601), p. 14.

Appendix Q



BARRED OUT

WHEN WOMAN HAS HER VOTE

From *Life* (1913 October 16), vol. 67 (1616), p. 646.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"——DREAMING DREAMS NO MORTAL EVER DARED TO DREAM BEFORE"

From *Life* (1914 June 14), vol. 68, p. 1009.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix S

"WOMAN IS NOT FIT FOR THE BALLOT"

From *Life* (1912 September 5), vol. 65 (1558), p. 1725.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix T

From *Life* (1914 December 3), vol. 69, p. 1009.

Appendix U

WHY NOT LET THE SUFFRAGETTES AND THE ANTIS HAVE IT OUT?

From *Life* (1910 May 19), vol. 60 (1438), p. 919.

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Appendix V

From *Life* (1913 September 14), vol. 67 (1611), p. 382.

Appendix W

WHY NOT?

From *Life* (1913 July 3), vol. 66 (1601), p. 13.

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Displaced persons: Race, sex and new discourses of Orientalism in the U.S. mass media

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Running head: Race, sex and Orientalism

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Displaced persons: Race, sex and new discourses of Orientalism in the U.S. mass media

> The rich decorative mood sweeping through fashion has gone one step beyond elaborate jewel-coloured fabrics and accessories. After appearing on the foreheads, backs, arms and shoulders of catwalk models at the latest shows, ethnic body art is now making its appearance on the high street. Mehndi, the ancient art of painting semi-permanent henna designs on hands and feet, and bindi, the gem-like dots traditionally worn between the brows by Asian and Middle Eastern women to signify that they are married, have crossed cultures to become an integral part of Western streetwear. Madonna had her hands hennaed for the video of her recent hit, *Frozen*; Naomi Campbell regularly has her feet decorated; Gwen Stefani, of the pop group No Doubt, is rarely seen in public without a bindi and an elaborate design on her belly; and yoga lovers Sting and his wife, Trudi, have been known to have Zen "menhdi evenings," with an artist on hand to decorate guests' bodies.
>
> — *from an article in the* Sunday Telegraph
>
> (Campbell, 1998, p. 5)

The popularity of nose-rings, mehndi, and bindis in U.S. and European fashion circles is the latest manifestation of the appropriation of elements of Asian culture for Western amusement, a process that is centuries old and rooted in the history of

colonialism, domination and exoticization that marks East-West relations. These contemporary Asian-influenced style trends are pervasive in U.S. mass culture, showcased in the fashion and entertainment media as consumer fads to be adopted and discarded arbitrarily, without consideration of their origins or meanings beyond the fashion statement of the moment. Moreover, these markings of Asian femininity are not represented on Asian women's bodies; rather, they are almost always represented in the American media as adorning white women's bodies, a phenomenon that raises potent and pressing questions about race, gender and the politics of representation.

In this paper, I seek to elucidate and explore these questions as a way to understand more about the role of the mass media in articulating racial difference, with particular reference to Asian Americans. This paper seeks to account for race and national identity as part of a critical analysis of the politics of the female body in mass culture. Using contemporary trends that have delineated Indian-inspired body art and costuming as high fashion, my goal is to develop a paradigm that will allow for a complex understanding of the current media embrace of symbols of Asian femininity and the social, cultural and political issues raised by it for Asian American women.

The questions that enfold this investigation include: How is the Indian woman's body displaced/reconstituted in media texts? What sort of symbolic space does Indian femininity occupy in Western culture that requires its simultaneous appropriation and erasure? How does the dislocation of the symbols of Indian femininity contribute to the discourse of "Orientalism" that remains part of Western culture? These questions turn on the pivotal point that while the artifacts of Indian femininity and sexuality are embraced and even celebrated in the U.S. mass media, they cannot, it seems, be linked

with the actual bodies and cultural histories of Indian women. The ensuing analysis attempts to deal with these paradoxes.

Mediating Indian femininity

The phenomenon of Indian-inspired femininity as a Western media trend can be traced to February 1998, when pop icon Madonna released her Indian-inspired video "Frozen." The blond, white-skinned singer appeared in the video adorned with mehndi, and a few months later showed up at the MTV Video Awards fully decorated with Indian religious symbols and wearing a salwar kameez outfit. Her appropriation of sacred "Vaishnava tilak" facial markings offended Hindu fundamentalist groups, who deemed her behavior blasphemous (Associated Press, 1998).

While Madonna did not initiate the fashion for Indian beauty accessories—that had been a growing trend among youth for a couple of years prior to the video—she did propel it into the public eye by attracting the attention of the worldwide media. As the Sunday Times of London noted,

> for the final proof of any trend, Madonna is the best barometer. ... She has stopped going to the gym, paints her hands with mehndi, and studies yoga and Hinduism instead. (Garratt, 1998).

Following her adoption of Indian cultural iconography, other celebrities embraced the same styles, and the fashion, beauty and entertainment press gave it considerable coverage in the calendar year that ensued, when the craze for Indian adornment reached a peak. Religious and cultural symbols of Indian femininity became translated in the Western media as the apex of high fashion.

In their representation in Western media, these symbols were—and continue to be—part of the decoration of highly sexualized Anglo women. Besides Madonna, adopters of Indian religious and cultural signs prominent in the mass media include Gwen Stefani of the pop group No Doubt, another fair-skinned blond woman whose use of the bindi is referred to in media texts as her "trademark," without any reference to its religious or cultural significance (in Indian culture, the bindi is worn only by women of the Hindu faith who are not widowed); actress Nicole Kidman, whose donning of 16th century Indian jewelry to accessorize her Dior gown at the 1998 Oscars was much ballyhooed in the press coverage; and actress Liv Tyler, who appeared in *Vanity Fair* magazine bedecked with mehndi. Lucy Lawless and Renee O'Connor, the two white women who star in the subcultural television show "Xena, Warrior Princess," adopted pseudo-Indian clothing, studied yoga, were adorned with mehndi that turned out to have magical powers, and were visited by the Hindu god Krishna during four episodes of the series set in India. *Seventeen* magazine's 1998 back-to-school issue featured white schoolgirls in mehndi and bindis, and the July 1999 issue of *Cosmopolitan* carried a fashion spread in which the copy read, "Get an India jones for this hip new imported-from-the East look..." , noting, "Bindis are for fun!" and featuring white models and actresses in pseudo-Indian attire and accessories (Indian Summer, 1999, pp. 70-71). In addition, the high-fashion design houses of Giorgio Armani and Issey Miyake's 1998 shows featured Indian-inspired fabrics and designs, showcased on the willowy bodies of Western, almost all white, runway models.

Thus, at the center of all of the exultation over Indian-inspired fashion are Caucasian women designated by the Western media as epitomizing dominant social

standards of beauty and glamour. The Indian markings are strategically showcased to underscore those standards. In these images, the foreign character of the markings and the jewelry add an exotic dimension to the women's body displays. The power of the markings lies in their appropriation by white women whose bodies and sexual comportment conform to idealized Western notions of beauty. The same markings on a dark-skinned Asian woman do not—cannot—carry the same power. Bordo (1993) offers a trenchant discussion of women's self-transformation as it is related to the concept of cultural valence, arguing that when a white woman adopts ethnic styles, the historical and contemporary significance—the symbolic weight—is different from when a woman of color adopts white/dominant styles. In these media images—and others that similarly showcase Indian markings on white women's bodies—the trope of the wildly sexual Oriental woman is conflated with the racialized sexual dominance of the white-skinned, slender, usually blond woman to create a powerful sexual image that uses symbols of Asian femininity to achieve its authority.

The Indian adornments can therefore be understood as devices or strategies rather than objects, and these strategies are tied to issues of nation, race, and sexuality. They have historical specificity, in that they speak to the mutually constitutive categories of "East" and "West," recirculating imperialist tropes that have taken shape over many years. These tropes engage systems of capital and dominance that intersect with discourses of sex to position Asian women within a political order of desire, signification and power. Reviewing the history of this positioning will provide a context for the analysis of this phenomenon.

Consuming the exotic Other

Several studies detail the constitution of the Oriental "Other" as the object of consumerism in Western society. Thomas (1965) recounts the history of Asian influences on Western fashion, beginning in the 1600s when Catherine of Braganza's dowry inspired a European, and then American, craze for "Oriental" fabrics, furnishings, and foodstuffs. Lalvani (1995) traces the strategies by which advertisers in nineteenth-century Britain exploited the allure of the Orient (particularly Oriental female sexuality) to sell products and legitimize consumer capitalism. Higashi (1994) and Studlar (1995) examine early Hollywood film representations of the Oriental tradition, again linking such representations to consumerism. "Orientalist fantasies associated with the attainment of momentary luxury were linked to the New Woman's culturally-encouraged acquisition of consumer goods," writes Studlar (p. 490). The Orient represented a sinful, luxurious world that was rhetorically and ideologically harnessed to consumerism in the pursuit of femininity; as Studlar points out, a "visual language of orientalism" in the mass media was deliberately aimed at Western female consumers.

The sexual overtones of this discourse cannot be ignored. The Orient was consistently depicted by the Western media as an arena of unleashed sexual desires and outlandish pleasures, particularly as far as women were concerned. Said (1978) first addressed the underpinnings of this ideology of Asian female sexuality when he described the Western conception of the Oriental woman as eager to be dominated, possessed of a "dumb and irreducible sexuality" (p. 187), and at the same time fascinatingly exotic. His celebrated take on Orientalism positioned these discursive formations as part of a Western rationale "for dominating, restructuring, and having

authority over the Orient" (Said, 1978, p. 3). In Said's view, the representations of Asian sexuality that are manifested in Western texts can be read first and foremost as expressions of the hegemony of Western society over Eastern cultures; in addition, they are peculiarly patriarchal constructions that are tied to the notion of Asia as "a deep, rich fund of female sexuality" (Said, 1978, p. 182).

While Said's explication of the racist and colonizing aspects of Orientalist discourse has considerable power, his somewhat oversimplified picture of East/West and male/female oppositions has been criticized in recent years (see Clifford, 1988; Lalvani, 1995; Lewis, 1996; Lowe, 1991). Bhabha (1983) in particular points out the ambivalence in Orientalist discourses: the simultaneous allure and menace of the exoticized Eastern other, the fetishistic nature of colonial discourse that is paradoxically infused with both erotic desire and racist contempt. Lalvani (1995) builds on the idea of this ambivalence, noting that "the imaginary construction of the Other's sexuality is central to a Western politics of desire" (p. 270). The voyeuristic positioning of the Asian female body in Western texts speaks to a variety of positions on sex, race, and power: in many ways, Asian women have always been seen as "similar enough [to Western women] to be desirable and different enough to be exciting" (Lewis, 1996, p. 173). Lalvani (1995) points out, "'La femme orientale' is a heterogenous site in which a multiplicity of discourses engage and intersect, in which dominant and emergent formations may contest each other, and in which other social differences and contradictions are articulated in an ongoing hegemonic process" (p. 265). Yet overall, in his analysis and others, the Asian female body in Western texts serves primarily to

concretize certain colonial and postcolonial myths and to strategically deploy Asian femininity as part of a patriarchal, heterosexist and racially hierarchical value system.

Whether Asian female sexuality is constituted this way intentionally is arguable and ultimately a moot point: what matters is that these representations are pervasive, have taken root in our culture, and serve to inscribe Asian women's sexuality in severely limited and fixed ways that have a signficant impact on society's understanding of Asian femininity as well as our understandings of ourselves. I will turn next to more contemporary portrayals of Asian women as a transition into the analysis of the present-day deployment of symbols of Asian femininity in the U.S. mass media.

Volatile bodies

The Asian woman's body is a powerful and longstanding signifier in American culture. She has appeared in our popular mythology again and again: in literature, in film, in magazines, in pop music, and on television, manifested via minor variations on a well-known theme. Early analyses of these representations provided us with the familiar bipolar stereotypes of "lotus blossom" versus "dragon lady" (Ling, 1989; Tajima, 1989), both operating within a highly sexualized and ideologically closed model of Asian womanhood. In this model, as Kondo (1997) points out, racial identities "are viewed as fixed, bounded entities containing some essence or substance, expressed in distinctive attributes" (p. 35). Thus, Asian (or Oriental) women are by nature as well as by culture predestined to be either submissive, fragile lotus blossoms, or treacherous, seductive dragon ladies. Alternative constructions, more complex notions of Asian femininity, are unfathomable.

Although I want to address Asian *American* sexuality, I must note at the outset that we cannot ignore Asia as the starting point for this discussion. The dominant framework for Asian American sexuality is built on assumptions and interpretations of Asian culture which, no matter how distant, must be acknowledged in order to develop a fuller understanding of these political currents.

Analyses of mass media representations of Asian American women center largely on cinema and television, and tend to deal mainly with immigrants from the Pacific Rim (China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines) whose history in the U.S. is the longest. Tajima (1989) points out that mainstream film and TV representations of Asian and Asian American women "have remained consistently simplistic and inaccurate during sixty years of largely forgettable screen appearances" (p. 309). Hamamoto (1994) contends that such demeaning and stereotypical portrayals of Asian Americans are rooted in "cynical purposes of social control" (p. 252). Following a neoGramscian train of thought, his analysis of network TV representations of Asian Americans locates ethnic stereotyping within hegemonic cultural practice. "The social construction of Asian American 'otherness' is the precondition for their cultural marginalization, political impotence, and psychic alienation from mainstream American life," he writes (Hamamoto, 1994, p. 5). While he does not specifically incorporate analyses of gender or sexuality into his study, he is aware of the hypersexualization of the Asian American woman and the popularity of the "Asian War Bride" character that is a mainstay on shows like M*A*S*H:

> The Asian War Bride is the ideal companion or wife to white American males who prefer "traditional" women untainted by such quaint notions as

> gender equality. In recent years, perhaps in response to conservative male backlash against the advances of the women's movement over the past twenty years, there have been any number of "dating" and marriage services that promise to deliver compliant overseas Asian women to men in search of alternatives to native-born Americans who might have been exposed to the virus of feminism. (Hamamoto, 1994, p. 26)

Tajima (1989) is aware of this stereotype, but like Ling she recognizes a dichotomous characterization of Asian femininity in the mass media: on the one hand, the passive sex slave who exists to serve white men (Lotus Blossom/War Bride), and on the other, the evil criminal seductress (Dragon Lady). Tajima, too, contends that the Lotus Blossom character has influenced U.S. attitudes toward Asian femininity, spawning an entire mail-order bride industry. "Today," Tajima writes, "the Filipino wife is particularly in vogue for American men who order Asian brides from picture catalogues, just as you might buy an imported cheese slicer from picture catalogues" (1989, p. 309). Kim (1984) notes that the stereotype of Asian women as submissive and dainty sex objects has given rise to "an enormous demand for X-rated films featuring Asian women and the emphasis on bondage in pornographic materials about Asian women" (p. 64).

This prevailing notion of the docile and submissive Asian woman extends to similar assumptions about Asian American women—a dangerous trend, in Tajima's view:

> Several generations of Asian women have been raised with racist and sexist celluloid images. The models for passivity and servility in these

> films and television programs fit neatly into the myths imposed on us, and contrast sharply with the more liberating ideals of independence and activism. Generations of other Americans have also grown up with these images. And their acceptance of the dehumanization implicit in the stereotypes of expendability and invisibility is frightening. (Tajima, 1989, p. 317)

Distortions and misrepresentations have serious implications as they function to naturalize socially constructed myths about Asian women. Yet it is not as though these constructions have gone uncontested and unproblematized in contemporary society. On the one hand, an emerging generation of Asian-American and –European women writers, photographers, and filmmakers are producing self-representations that challenge these pervasive and oppressive myths (Mehta, 1996; Lee, 1998). On the other, Foucaultian constructions of subjectivity and objectification are being reformulated by rebellious rereadings of these images. Rony (1996) offers us the idea of the Third Eye—the gaze that the object of ethnographic spectacle turns back on the viewer, a gaze that marks the viewer and reconstitutes him from the viewpoint of the objectified Other. In this process, "[b]oth viewer and subject are captives and captors, both are involved in mediating the image of self between the known and unknown, both are coperforming a narrative of selfhood" (Foster, 1999, p. 22)—a dynamic that allows for resistance, for transgressive reinscriptions of power roles.

Given these possibilities, there remains an aspect of representation that has not been adequately problematized or dealt with in the literature, and that is the notion of invisibility or erasure. Williams (1980) points out the transmission of culture involves

selection and interpretation: "it is a fact about the modes of domination that they select from and consequently exclude the full range of actual and possible human practice" (p. 43). What is selected for transmission, and what is suppressed or expunged, reveals much about the politics of the social context. In this vein, certain Asian ethnicities are selected for representation and interpretation in the mass media (as injurious as this might be), while others—specifically, South Asian ones[1]—suffer from a curious kind of displacement. It is this phenomenon of displacement that I wish to consider in detail in this paper.

I am not referring here to outright invisibility or total eradication; that would be easier to make sense of as a more or less straightforward case of "symbolic annihilation," to use Gerbner's familiar term (Gerbner, 1972, p. 44). Rather, in studying ways of representing Asian femininity in U.S. mass culture, certain ethnic groups suffer from what I can only describe as a "semi- erasure," a simultaneous visibility and invisibility that calls to mind a phantasm or magic trick. It is a significantly different form of representation than the heavy-handed and crude stereotyping discussed above, but its implications are equally pernicious.

Tajima alludes briefly to this phenomenon via the trope of the "made-up Asian," exemplified in such films as HBO's *The Far Pavilions*, where Amy Irving was cast as the Indian heroine. "Even mainstream critics had to chuckle at the brown shoepolish make-up and exaggerated boldface eyeliner worn by Irving," Tajima notes (1989, p. 313). This character was certainly not the first or last Asian to be portrayed by a Caucasian actor with exaggerated eyes and pancake make-up, but the issue deserves more than a dismissive giggle. What is striking here is that the bodies of Indian women, in particular,

are systematically displaced in the American mass media—sometimes replaced by the bodies of white women, and sometimes not replaced at all: the outline of where the body should be remains, but the lady vanishes.

Gender, place and body politics

In contemporary media representations of Indian body art on the bodies of iconic white female celebrities, the Indian woman is Othered by stripping the traditional symbols of her femininity from her body and using them to intensify the sexual appeal of the white woman. Thus, the political is located within the sexual to deploy a neocolonial construction of desire. Lowe (1991) reminds us of the traditional association of the Occident with the male gaze and the Orient with the female object of the gaze. Given this premise, these images represent a double alterity: the white female as sexual object, and the Asian Indian female as the intangible and disembodied fetish that supports white female sexuality.

Two distinct theoretical threads coalesce in this analysis; one tracks the idea that "[w]omen have been objectified and alienated as social subjects partly through the denigration and containment of the female body" (Grosz, 1994, p. xiv), the other, that India exists in the Western imagination as part of a colonial idiom that renders it a volatile metaphor used to chart lack and difference from Western mores (see Chaudhary, 1998; Sen, 1993; Gokhale, 1992). By locating the current trendiness of Indian-inspired body art and costuming at the intersection of these discourses, I seek to create here a paradigm with which to interpret the displacement of the Indian woman's body in contemporary Western popular culture.

Grosz (1994) points out, "The body must be regarded as a site of social, political, cultural, and geographical inscriptions, production, or constitution. The body is not opposed to culture, a resistant throwback to a natural past; it is itself a cultural, the cultural, product." White women's bodies are the dominant cultural product of popular media in that they are deployed as sexual signifiers that serve to mobilize capital (Williamson, 1986; Faurshou, 1988; Shields, 1990; McCracken, 1993; MacCurdy, 1994). In her study of the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue, Davis (1997) outlines the racial hierarchy that underpins this commodification of women's desirability, noting that "[w]omen with white skin, blonde and straight hair, blue eyes and small noses are at the top, and women with dark skin, black and curly hair, and big noses are at the bottom" (p. 92). This hierarchy automatically relegates women of color to the lowest rung, on the basis of phenotype.

Yet dark skin presents a paradox in this construction, since in the Western cultural idiom it signifies an exotic hypersexuality. The problematic of skin color and its metaphorical link to sexuality complicates representation, necessitating a racialized layering of characteristics in media representations of ideal female sexuality. Thus, Davis (1997) notes that since the 1970s, blonde and blue-eyed *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit models have had tanned skin—although "only whites can afford to get a tan, because they do not have to (for the most part) endure racism" (p. 91). In a parallel and more pernicious construction, dark-skinned women are put to use in the mass media "to highlight whiteness" (hooks, 1992, p. 28). In hooks' analysis of this latter phenomenon, a key theme is that whiteness is the focus of media forays into the representation of the Other. The nonwhite "exotic" is a backdrop and a foil, a contrivance that reaffirms the

elements of ideal whiteness and marks the distance between white and Other. As Foster (1999) expresses it, "The definition of the clean White body is maintained by the insistent prevalence of images of an/other" (p. 3).

A corollary of this trend is white/mainstream culture's appropriation of nonwhite cultural products. hooks (1992) notes,

> Currently, the commodification of difference promotes paradigms of consumption wherein whatever difference the Other inhabits is eradicated, via exchange, by a consumer cannibalism that not only displaces the Other but denies the significance of that Other's history through a process of decontextualization. (p. 31)

Through this process, cultural products are carelessly circulated in consumer society, stripped of their meaning and their political integrity and converted into empty, expendable decorations. Any social consciousness or potential for critique or disruption that these products may have held is canceled: "As signs, their power to ignite critical consciousness is diffused when they are commodified. Communities of resistance are replaced by communities of consumption" (hooks, 1992, p. 33).

The white mainstream's adoption of symbols of Indian femininity speaks to this hegemonic process of disabling social critique and change. The popularity of mehndi, bindi, nose-rings, and the like, comes at a powerful political moment. This is a time when progressive social movements—affirmative action, immigrant rights, abortion rights—are under attack, and the dominant discourse is one of containing the political uprisings of marginalized members of U.S. society. It is also a time when India is making its presence felt in the West in multiple and potentially subversive ways. Indian

immigration to the West is on the rise, and the types of immigrants that are making their way into Western society challenge the traditional place of India in the Western world-view. The new Indian immigrants

> are highly visible to Americans in professional and technical occupations, and they make an impact on the American image of India. That impact must lead to some schizophrenia in the American mind, because it contrasts with the prevailing image of Indian poverty and economic fecklessness. As against swamis and gurus, or the poverty-stricken masses of India, the American sees around him pragmatic and effective stockbrokers, financial analysts, scientists, engineers, doctors, and entrepreneurs. How the American mind will accommodate to this double vision I do not know: At least it will complicate the image of India in the American mind. (Glazer, 1990, p. 17)

Indian women—degreed, professional women with drive and independence—are among this group of immigrants, and they in particular challenge traditional views of the Oriental female, whose docility, subservience and dumb sexuality are indelible markers of her existence, in the Western construction (Mohanty, 1991). Western culture's appropriation of the symbols that inscribe Indian femininity functions, first, to disconnect them from the bodies of Indian women—bodies that threaten to subvert this essentialized construction; second, to trivialize and delegitimize them as cultural products with specific history and meaning to Indian women; and third, to recirculate them as signs of exotic sexuality that provide a dramatic aesthetic polarity against which to position and reassert the superiority of white women in the hierarchy of appearance.

The illusion is of cultural hybridization, but the underlying formulation reinforces the political notion that "East and West form closed, mutually exclusive spaces where one term inevitably dominates the other" (Kondo, 1997, p. 49).

Contestatory discourses: rethinking gender, race and sexuality

The mediated displacement of Indian femininity onto the white body has significant implications for thinking about the representation of race and gender in the context of a contemporary discourse of Orientalism. Hall (1995) argues that "how things are represented and the 'machineries' and regimes of representation in a culture do play a *constitutive*, and not merely a reflexive, after-the-event, role" (p. 224). It is clear that the use of the imaginary East in media texts has not disappeared—in fact, it is recreated in order to stabilize dominant ideologies of femininity, sexuality and race. The U.S. mass media's presentation of Indian femininity as a substructure for white female sexuality serves to legitimate the hegemonic construction of Western superiority over Asian culture; moreover, by privileging the white body, it suppresses counterhegemonic discourses related to these issues of culture and national identity—for example, the use of nose-rings and mehndi by Asian American women seeking to reestablish their connections with their heritage in order to carve out spaces of resistance to the dominant ideology of assimilation. Such constructions are denied entry into mainstream media texts, perhaps because they threaten to destabilize prevalent fantasies about the mysterious, sensuous Orient and its value to the Western politics of desire. In this phenomenon of displacement, there is no Third Eye—no possibility for returning the gaze.

It is vital to explore the implications of these representational issues for Asian American women. DuttaAhmed (1996) writes of a "splitting" of the Asian American self—the recognition of Otherness within our intimate relationship to the "colonizing" culture. "It is in fact disrupted selves, multiple selves, that the border posits, rather than the singular, identifiable Other who is then configured in opposition to the Western subject," he writes (p. 339). Further, he argues that this disruption of the self is "actualized through the representational strategies by which the Other has been inscribed in dominant culture" (p. 340). The tensions inherent in this troubled positioning point to a need to explore our representational history in a way that might produce some kind of repositioning. Yet, DuttaAhmed cautions, visibility alone is not a sufficient goal, "because issues of difference remain ideologically valenced ... and [do] not disrupt the relationships of power between observer and observed" (p. 346).

What, then, is the value of cultural critique that not only exposes certain dominant core assumptions about Indian women in America but makes female whiteness visible as a politically motivated ethnic/sexual construction? I believe it has the potential to open up a way of retheorizing Asian American sexual agency. This kind of critique can situate representational stereotypes not as dead ends or as fixed elements, but as a tool for understanding sexuality and identity as relational. This brings to bear the notion of "articulation" developed by Hall (1986), where ideological elements are "connected to each other, but through a specific linkage, that can be broken" (p. 53). Reflecting on the ways in which Asian American female sexuality is articulated to white female sexuality in the dominant culture can spur us to reformulate our sexual subjectivity and explore the "splitting" that DuttaAhmed writes about: we can take into

account and also contest the power of those articulations on the basis of our diasporic ontology, our lived experiences as Asian American women. The goal would not be re-presentation so much as social and cultural transformation: a reclaiming and reorganization of the elements of cultural practice into new discursive formations that would first, release Asian women's sexuality from bondage to whiteness, and second, catalyze the emergence of concepts of sexuality that would address the goals of Asian women, rather than those of white men, white women, or the recolonization of the Orient.

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Endnotes

[1]The term "South Asian" is used to refer to the countries of the Indian subcontinent (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka), as well as to the neighboring countries of Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan, and Afghanistan. Bahri and Vasudeva (1996) point out that the term in the context of the Asian American diaspora has specifically political connotations and is

> today deployed in Anglo-America for various purposes: to gain visibility in the sociopolitical arena; to speak against racism and misrepresentation from a position of collectivity; to initiate social action for the economically depressed and systematically alienated among the group; to open an avenue for the exploration of lost or receding cultural ties with the country of origin, to provide a forum for expressing and investigating experiences and feelings of displacement, alienation, and other forms of cultural anxiety; and to gain a more equal footing, perhaps even an advantage, in market value and economic opportunity. (p. 7)

Gender and Cultural Hegemony in Reality-Based Television Programming:

The World According to *A Wedding Story*

by

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Gender and Cultural Hegemony in Reality-Based Television Programming: The World According to *A Wedding Story*

Abstract

"A Wedding Story," which airs on The Learning Channel, depicts the real-life weddings of ordinary American couples. In this exploratory content analysis of 50 episodes, the author investigates how televised weddings perpetuate a cultural hegemony that promotes traditional gender roles, rituals, and consumerism. Future research suggestions into the media portrayal of weddings include examining gender-related aspects of the production process, and analyzing contradictory media messages that both promote and challenge society's expectations regarding women.

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Gender and Cultural Hegemony in Reality-Based Television Programming: The World According to *A Wedding Story*

One of the most significant events in American cultural life, the wedding serves as a ritual that holds a unique place, in that is one of only a few rites of passage experienced by almost everyone in American society, either as a participant or observer. Weddings are also big business in the U.S., with an estimated $35 billion in revenues per year; today's formal wedding averages $17,634, with an average reception price of $6,503 (Galper, 1998). The investment of money and time that go into the traditional wedding makes it not only a major event, but also a major expense for those starting married life in the 1990s.

The wedding, and its portrayal in various mass media, provides a myriad of research possibilities for communication scholars. With the increase in media outlets and forms that focus on this financially and socially important event, the gender roles and ideals embodied in cultural rituals and norms become propagated even more widely within society. Information concerning how much should be spent on a wedding, and the intricate details of the wedding ceremony, is disseminated widely through the mass media in such channels as bridal magazines and books, Internet web sites, televised news events, and television programs and films, which often devote large amounts of time to such ritual occasions (Otnes & Scott, 1996).

Professional wedding photography also serves as a channel by which society learns of the accepted practices and traditional values contained in the wedding ceremony, and can be likened to other forms of media, in that it is a "structured communicative practice" (Lewis, 1992, p. 1). More recently, wedding videos serve the same purpose.

The wedding has held prominence in other media channels as well. Stephens (1997) points out that news pamphlets during the 1500s contained stories of prominent weddings. Weddings of royalty, for example,

> "commanded readers' attention as spectacles in an age when spectacles had not yet been cheapened by overexposure. News reports on royal pomp and circumstance dwelt on the details because the events depicted were more extravagant and magnificent than anything else in their readers' experience" (p. 95).

This appeal can explain the tremendous television audiences for contemporary royal weddings, such as that of Princess Diana and Prince Charles in 1991, and media coverage of weddings of the rich and famous. More recently, the appeal of the wedding has manifested itself in reality programming on cable television. While some of these programs have featured the real-life weddings of Hollywood celebrities, one new program features the weddings of everyday people. "A Wedding Story," which airs on The Learning Channel, in half-hour segments traces the wedding stories of ordinary American couples. These accounts reflect traditional cultural elements of the traditional wedding, as well as other cultural norms and practices that surround the contemporary American wedding.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the cultural elements contained in "A Wedding Story" in terms of how they reflect historically traditional norms and expectations. More specifically, this paper will investigate the incorporation of traditional gender roles and values as they are symbolized in the wedding ritual, and how popular communication of weddings promotes and perpetuates a cultural hegemony which promotes acceptable and "normal" wedding practices (for example, weddings are inherently reserved for heterosexual couples). Additionally, the issue of how such television programming cultivates a certain perspective, which supports the views of

the dominant culture, through the inclusion and exclusion of information in the wedding stories of those featured in the program, will be addressed. It is hoped that such an investigation will contribute to the growing body of literature concerning gender-based cultural hegemony and its manifestations in popular culture, communication, and everyday life.

Wedding Symbolism and Ritual

The wedding ceremony is fraught with numerous rituals and artifacts that hold special, almost magical, meaning for its participants. In terms of the wedding as a whole, as Currie (1993) states, it "signifies commitment and shared love" (p. 415). The wedding also symbolizes family ties, and the public acknowledgment of legal union of two people (Currie, 1993, p. 419). The wedding, as it is known in American society, comprises a full range of elements and practices not found in other occasions, such as gift giving, artifacts, costumes, and scripted behaviors (Otnes & Scott, 1996).

Currie (1993) lists the ritual artifacts found in most conventional wedding ceremonies, symbols that reflect patriarchal customs engendering traditional views of women as objects. These include the custom of treating the bride as the object of attention, as it is "her" day; the exchange of the bride from her father to her husband; the wedding ring, as it symbolizes bride price; the white bridal gown, which denotes virginity; and the throwing of rice after the ceremony, which symbolizes wishes for fertility.

The traditional American wedding ceremony follows a strict script. Indeed, it is basically a performance complete with actors, props, and an audience. Murphy (1978) provides the play-by-play account of the ceremony:

> On the wedding day itself, the planning has come down to hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute timing. Ceremony minus two hours; the bride begins to dress. Ceremony minus thirty minutes; the organ or orchestra begins to play. Ceremony

> minus twenty minutes; the groom and best man arrive. Ceremony minus five minutes; groom's parents are seated, bride and escort arrive outside. On the hour decided, to the second: entry of the bride (p. 244-245).

During the ceremony itself, various props are used, vows are repeated, the couple is pronounced husband and wife. Afterward, the couple is publicly acknowledged at the reception, wherein other props and customs are employed: the traditional "cutting the cake" (Charsley, 1992), best man's toast, bridal bouquet and garter toss, the first dance. The wedding day incorporates an elaborate timetable with hours of planning and money behind it.

Weddings and Gender Roles

Weddings are a traditional concern for women in American society, demarcating feminine and masculine roles in the wedding itself: "Although there are exceptions, the formal wedding, which blends the public and communal with the domestic and personal, is relegated to women and embraced by women" (Lewis, 1997, p. 184). As Lowrey and Otnes (1994) explain, the traditional view of the wedding is that it is the "bride's day," and the concern for the material goods related to wedding ceremony (artifacts such as the dress, veil, flowers, and rings) is typed as "feminine." Additionally, wedding planning falls into the feminine realm, with power and control of details handled by the bride-to-be and her parents, who traditionally pay for the wedding and reception. The wedding serves as a microcosm in which traditional roles are played out. For example, Currie (1993) points out that couples who claim to have egalitarian domestic relations before their wedding ironically become trapped in an unequal division of labor in planning their first public act as a married couple.

Because the wedding day is dedicated to the bride, her activities, as opposed to the groom's, in preparing for the wedding day reflect traditional ideals. Brides-to-be may spend

hours preparing themselves cosmetically, often having their hair styled at a beauty salon, for example. Such preparations that focus on the bride's physical appearance demonstrate the societal expectation that women not only should be physically attractive, but also "look" the part of bride.

The ritual of the wedding finds its roots in the patriarchal culture system, as noted by Lewis (1997). Prescribed gender roles in such a culture still manifest themselves in today's modern formal wedding: "brides are still 'given away' by fathers to grooms; the bride is still displayed in the ritual costume of the white dress; many brides are still taught from an early age that the apex of life is their wedding" (Lewis, 1997, p. 186). Thus, while women seek and fulfill non-stereotypical roles in society, the wedding still perpetuates traditional gender roles, whether brides who choose this type of wedding recognize it or not. Lewis (1997) contends that wedding photography, as a mass medium, "help legitimate and preserve a patriarchal view of the world" (p. 186).

Ritual artifacts, too, correspond to gender roles. In Lowrey and Otnes' (1994) focus group study of brides and grooms, they found that brides considered highly important the wedding dress and its related accessories, the minister and church, ceremony music, decorations, photographs, rings, and flowers. Many of these artifacts also held a mystical or magical aura for the brides in that study. For example, the search for the "perfect" wedding dress is acquired through "hierophany": the "right" dress appears almost magically; the bride knows somehow that "this is the one." The grooms in that study, on the other hand, were more concerned with the reception, and focused on making sure guests had a good time. They also showed interest in the wedding photographs and special artifacts that were incorporated into their weddings, ones that held significant meaning for them individually.

Cultural Hegemony and Mass Media

The ritual artifacts, symbolic meanings, and gender roles as embedded in the traditional wedding in American society mirror a hegemonic, or dominant, view of marriage. The wedding as a culturally accepted ritual of everyday life thus serves as a conduit for the dissemination of patriarchal ideals and gender expectations in society. These socially endorsed meanings, argues Wood (1994), "are also communicated through structures such as institutions, which serve to announce, reflect, and perpetuate cultural views."

The presentation of the modern wedding in the mass media, such as in magazines aimed at brides-to-be, popular contemporary films ("My Best Friend's Wedding" is a recent example), and television programs, helps to communicate and perpetuate socially accepted customs. In this sense, the commonality of wedding depictions in such media and the actual practice of these traditional customs reflect social norms in our society, which demonstrates Storey's (1993) explanation that hegemony "suggests a society in which there is a high degree of consensus, a large measure of social stability, in which subordinate classes appear to actively support and subscribe to values, ideals, objectives, cultural meanings, which bind them to, incorporate them into, the prevailing power structure" (p. 119).

Additionally, Hardt (1992), citing Stuart Hall, states that the media "function in several ways to maintain their cultural and ideological position...they provide and selectively construct social knowledge, they classify and reflect upon the plurality of social life, and they construct a complex, acknowledged order" (p. 190). Wood (1994) reiterates that the media reflect cultural ideals and values through its various forms of content, and they "reproduce cultural views of gender in individuals" and define "normality" (p. 231).

Lewis (1997) examined traditional wedding photography in terms of the cultural hegemony present in that medium, focusing on the obvious consumerism evident in the use of wedding attire and other forms captured on film. He also analyzed wedding photographs in terms of how gender roles and patriarchal ideals were evidenced in brides' and grooms' poses in formal pictures, and in pictures featuring the bride and her father as they prepared make their entrance into the wedding site. Lewis applies hegemony to its presence in the media: "Hegemony in mediated communication is a process by which one set of meanings is produced regularly and is accepted as credible to the point that it is taken for granted" (p. 179).

In addition to the cultural themes mentioned above, the wedding also promotes consumerism, in the form of conspicuous consumption, as being acceptable. The wedding, as noted by Lowrey and Otnes (1994), is an "expensive and often highly publicized ceremony." The artifacts, deemed as essential by etiquette handbooks, bridal guides and magazines, are costly. Bridal gowns alone may cost thousands of dollars. This acceptance of wedding costs, especially by middle-class society, further enhances the dominant view of weddings as a highly significant social event, especially as it serves as such for women. We find that sources of acceptable cultural practices come from, obviously, the wedding industry itself, and from other media industries. For instance, Otnes and Scott (1996) trace the accepted practice of the diamond engagement ring to an advertising campaign designed for the DeBeers diamond company. The campaign incorporated a made-up history of the engagement ring in the U.S., where none had existed. In short, the formal wedding legitimizes and promotes consumerism (Lewis, 1997). The high cost of ritual-related items is an accepted part of getting married in our society. This conspicuous consumption, perpetuated in the media as an accepted, taken-for-granted

(hegemonic) practice, often results in the newly married couple starting their new life in debt (Currie, 1993).

Besides a hegemonic approach to how the wedding is communicated by the media, we can apply a cultivation perspective to its study. For example, Signiorelli and Morgan (1996) discuss, in their review of cultivation theory, that "within American culture exists a dominant set of culture beliefs, values, and practices" and that within this theory, "television serves as the primary manifestation of our culture's mainstream" (p. 117). Television, as a primary medium by which cultural values are disseminated in our society, then, promotes the "mainstream," or "relative commonality of outlooks and values" (p. 117).

To sum, the current study extends Lewis' (1997) research regarding hegemony in wedding photographs: It examines cultural hegemony and its cultivation in the videotaped, televised wedding by investigating how the rituals, artifacts, costs, and gender role expectations and performances in the formal wedding reflect the dominant, accepted views and practices in American culture.

Reality-Based Programming and Popular Culture

Reality-based television programming has proliferated in recent years. McAvoy (1996) points to the appeal of such programming especially among cable channels: "The shows often generate solid ratings and, like talk shows, benefit from their inexpensive costs and sets" (p. 30). Additionally, the proliferation of "slice-of-life programming" on cable illustrates the increased viewer attraction of these shows. This type of program breaks away from traditional television programming, in that it can be considered *true* popular culture, originating, as the very term implies, from the "people." However, Storey (1993) critiques this way of thinking of popular culture by explaining that it avoids the actual source of culture. In other words, the definition

causes one to ask, "Who are 'the people'?" In the case of reality programming, the source of the culture being presented *is*, in fact, "the people," the American public. The producers of these programs do not truly create the content. They do, however, act as story editors. Reality-based programming, then, offers both a reflection of culture, as it manifests itself in "real" people's lives, and the opportunity of those involved in the gatekeeping function of the media to regulate its content.

Traditional Weddings and Values in "A Wedding Story"

The Learning Channel's "A Wedding Story" serves as a typical example of reality-based programming. It consists of a half-hour program featuring a real-life wedding of an "ordinary" American couple. Because it is based in reality, the show provides an ideal medium for examining how popular culture, as practiced in American everyday life, is depicted in the media. Thus, the research question posed here is: What kinds of wedding rituals, artifacts, and structure are most commonly presented in current reality based programming? By answering this question, this researcher aims to provide some preliminary evidence to support the notion that the "mainstream" or status quo continues to be presented by producers of reality based programming, and that there exists a hegemonic view of American weddings accepted by society that perpetuates a patriarchal social system and the endorsement of conspicuous consumption.

Two episodes of "A Wedding Story" currently air weekdays on The Learning Channel from 3 to 4 p.m. (EST). The show recruits couples with an announcement at the end of each episode that invites them to submit information about their upcoming weddings along with their photographs. Footage is shot in "home-video" style. Each show follows the same basic pattern, and includes the following: a brief segment on the couple's background, in which each partner describes how they met and who proposed in what setting; activities of the bride and groom two

days before the wedding; the rehearsal of the ceremony and rehearsal dinner; the bride and groom each preparing for the wedding; the wedding ceremony itself; and the reception. The only narration comes from either the bride or groom. Each episode ends with the couple congratulating each other on the day's success and declaring their love for each other.

Method

For this exploratory study, 50 episodes, recorded over four months in 1998, were analyzed for content.[1] Each was coded according to the inclusion or exclusion of: traditional wedding artifacts, such as the white bridal gown and veil, wedding rings, and wedding cake; rituals, such as the escorting ("giving away") of the bride by her father, pre-wedding day activities, type and locale of ceremony, and reception activities (such as throwing of the bridal bouquet); and evidence of conspicuous consumption, such as use of limousines, and reception locale. Also included in the analysis was information regarding race of the bride and groom, who made the marriage proposal, and any special rituals or aspects included in the wedding itself. Data were then submitted to frequency analysis.

Results

Demographics

Regarding the race of the brides and grooms, 88% (44) of the grooms were Caucasian, 8% (4) were African-American, and 4% (2) were Asian-American (one was Japanese-American and one was Filipino-American). Eighty-four percent (42) of the brides were Caucasian, 8% (4) were African-American, 6% (3) were of Asian descent (one was Chinese-Canadian, one was Chinese-American, and one was Vietnamese). One bride (2%) was Hispanic. Regarding the composition of the 50 couples portrayed, most 78% (39) were both Caucasian, 8% (4) were both African-American, and 14% (7) were bi-racial/ethnic (2 couples consisted of a Caucasian bride

and Asian-American groom; 3 couples consisted of a bride of Asian descent and Caucasian groom; one couple consisted of a Hispanic bride and Caucasian groom; one couple consisted of a Caucasian, American bride and Lebanese groom). Though age of the couples was not included in the data analysis, all the couples appeared to be between 20 and 40 years old.

In nearly all cases (98%, 49) the groom proposed marriage. Most of the couples (90%, 45) did not mention living together before their marriage; for five couples (10%), co-habitation was either mentioned or implied (for example, one couple mentioned they had bought a house together and were shown working out in their basement gym).

Most (84%, 42) of the weddings occurred in Eastern U.S. states, 6% (3) in Midwestern states, 4% (2) in Western states, and 2% (1) in Canada (the production company for "A Wedding Story," Banyan Productions, is headquartered in Philadelphia, PA).

Pre-Wedding Activities and Gender Roles

Part of "A Wedding Story" features the bride and groom getting ready for their wedding day; they are shown making preparations during the period just one to two days prior to the wedding and/or just hours or minutes before the ceremony. Brides' activities centered on cosmetic preparations; they either got dressed and put on make-up or had a make-up artist apply it at home or hotel (43%, 21), had hair and/or make-up done at a beauty salon (49%, 24); or split their pre-wedding time between the beauty salon and home or hotel (8%, 4).

Grooms' activities, in contrast, were more varied. Forty-six percent (20) of the grooms' pre-wedding activities involved dressing at home or hotel, going for a massage, or having their hair cut at a barber shop; 30% (13) went golfing; 12% (5) were shown playing some other outdoor sport, such as football or shooting; 7% (3) went out to eat with their male wedding party

members; and 5% (2) were depicted in other activities (one participated in a Civil War battle re-enactment and one went shopping for a gift for his bride).

Traditional Artifacts

In most of all of the episodes analyzed, the bride wore a white bridal gown (94%, 47) and veil (90%, 45). Of the three brides who did not wear a traditional white dress, one wore a reproduction of a 19th century Civil War-era wedding dress, one wore a reproduction of an 18th century Revolutionary War-era wedding dress, and one wore a traditional German wedding costume. As for the grooms' attire, 84% (42) wore tuxedos, 8% (4) wore a military dress uniform, 2% (1) wore a business suit, and 2% (1) one wore a traditional German wedding costume.

Traditional wedding bands exchanged in a double ring wedding ceremonies were featured in 96% (49) of the episodes (in one episode, this was not shown). The traditional, tiered wedding cake was prominently featured in close-up shots during the receptions in 66% (33) of the episodes.

Traditional Rituals

In general, the wedding ceremonies followed the same pattern as described by Murphy (1978), with the groom waiting near the officiant, bride escorted down the aisle, and commencement of the ceremony itself. Most of the wedding ceremonies occurred in a church (66%, 33) (one was performed in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City), 24% (12) were performed outdoors, either at a residence or historic home, 4% (2) were performed in reception halls. Three weddings (6%) occurred in other locales: one was performed at a public even (a horse show), one on a yacht, and one on a covered bridge. Eighty-four percent (42) of the weddings were performed by a minister or priest, 4% (2) were performed by a rabbi, 2% (1)

was performed by a justice of the peace, and 10% (5) were performed by others, such as a combination of priest and rabbi (in dual-faith ceremonies), friend of the couple, or by an officiant not specifically referred to or identifiable as a minister or justice of the peace.

Most brides (68%, 34) were escorted down the aisle by their fathers (one bride was escorted by both her father and stepfather), 14% (7) were escorted by both parents (as in the case of traditional Jewish ceremonies), 8% (4) were escorted by a family member other than their father, such as brother, uncle, or mother only. Six percent (3) of the brides were unescorted and entered the ceremony alone. Four percent (2) were escorted by people other than family members; one was escorted by the groom and one was escorted by a male friend.

In 92% (46) of the wedding ceremonies, the couple made traditionally-worded vows (with phrases such as "for better and for worse, in sickness and in health"), either by repeating the officiant, or reciting them; many of these were religious in nature (including phrases such as "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," for example). Eight-percent (4) of the couples recited non-traditional vows or made their own. As mentioned previously, 96% (49) of the couples were shown exchanging rings during the ceremony.

In 76% (38) of the episodes, the ceremony consisted of exchanging vows and rings. In 24% (12) of the ceremonies, additional rituals were shown. Most of these were religious in nature, such as the breaking of glass in traditional Jewish ceremonies, and the placing of crowns on the couple's heads in one Greek Orthodox ceremony.

Because most of the episodes concentrated on how the bride and groom prepared for their wedding, little time was devoted to the reception itself. Reception activities in general were shown in video montages. Of the 50 shows, the cake cutting ritual (or shots of the couple feeding each other the wedding cake) was included in 78% (39) of the episodes. The best man's toast was

shown in 48% (24), the garter toss was shown in 18% (9), and the bouquet toss was shown in 22% (11).

Special rituals or aspects shown during the reception were also noted. In 48% (24) of the episodes, couples included rituals associated with a particular culture, such as the Chinese tea ceremony, "jumping the broom," or dancing. These rituals also included those associated with their profession, such as the military "sword arch."

Conspicuous Consumption

In addition to the attire of the couple, which for the most part consisted of traditional bridal gown and tuxedo, conspicuous consumption here was measured by other manifestations of expenses associated with the traditional wedding of today, such as limousines, reception setting, elaborate wedding cake, and dancing (which implies either the hiring of a disc jockey or band).

Size of the wedding party and audience was noted, as they relate to a wedding's scope—obviously a larger wedding would incur greater expense. Approximations of the number of bride's attendants as well as the number of guests were included in the data. Most of the weddings (48%, 24) included large bridal parties (4 or more attendants), 34% (17) of the bridal parties consisted of at least 2 attendants, and 14% (7) had bridal parties consisting of at least 3 attendants. In most cases, these corresponded to the number of groomsmen. Though much of the video footage during the ceremony consisted of close-ups of the bride and groom, cut-away shots of the audience did allow for some approximation of the number of guests. Most (48%, 24) of the episodes included churches with about 100 guests in the audience; 24% (12) weddings had between 50 and 75 guests; 12% (6) had around 200 guests, and 6% (3) of the ceremonies were intimate, with about 20 guests.

In more than half the episodes (58%, 29), couples were shown being transported either to (usually the bride and bridal party, or bride and her father) or from the ceremony site in limousines (in at least two cases, larger bridal parties were transported via tour bus). Of the sites shown in the episodes, most (74%, 37) of the receptions were held at a reception hall (such as in a hotel or country club), 14% (7) were held in restaurants, and 12% (6) were held outdoors.

Wedding cakes, as mentioned previously, were featured in close ups in 66% of the episodes. Dancing at the reception was shown in 92% (34) of the shows.

Discussion

Taken together, the data indicate that the typical wedding portrayed in "A Wedding Story" is the traditional white wedding replete with the artifacts, rituals, and consumption as dictated and described by and in other mass media: bridal magazines, films, and wedding photography. Not surprisingly, these preliminary findings strongly suggest that a cultural hegemony exists within the content of the program, one that both perpetuates and promotes traditional gender roles, especially those that are symbolized in the wedding ceremony itself. However, the show and others like it serve as prime material to study their content and the dominant socio-cultural views regarding universal concepts of love, commitment, and relationships.

In all of the episodes included in the sample, the groom proposed marriage. Regarding pre-wedding activities, the findings suggest further gender differences. Brides spent their time readying themselves in terms of hair, make-up, and attire. In contrast, several episodes showed the groom playing golf or some other kind of sport some time just prior to the wedding. In one episode, the bride was shown "getting ready" on the wedding day along with other members of the bridal party, searching for jewelry for one of her attendants (a child), and driving herself to the

wedding site. Juxtaposed with those images was the groom, who was playing golf with his friends on his wedding day just hours prior to the ceremony. In sum, while their brides were occupied with mostly cosmetic concerns involving pre-wedding or wedding day preparations, the grooms were shown as implicitly having more choices in how they spent their time. The differences in the way brides and grooms prepared for their weddings may well reflect an imbalance of roles and responsibilities between the genders as they enter into marriage; through the depictions of such in television programs such as "A Wedding Story," this imbalance can be viewed as acceptable and even approved.

Regarding artifacts and rituals, the bride typically wore a traditional white dress, the symbol of purity and virginity in 94% of the weddings, and was escorted by someone (father, family members, friends) in 94% of them. The act of being escorted down the aisle connotes the dependence of the bride on her family to "give her" to the groom. What the image of the bride walking with someone to meet her husband-to-be at the ceremony implies is that she is not an independent person, capable of giving herself to her husband-to-be or even making the choice to commit to the relationship. As with wedding photography, which Lewis (1997) asserted convey and reaffirm traditional gender stereotypes, so do the images contained in the videotaped accounts of the weddings in "A Wedding Story."

Most of the weddings included in this study were similar in regard to traditional artifacts and rituals. Three of them were atypical, in that couple's attire and that of their wedding party, especially, broke with "tradition": one wedding occurred within the setting of a Civil War battle reenactment, with the bride and groom dressed in costumes of that period; one wedding reflected the couple's interest in the Revolutionary War, with the bride and groom wearing period costumes; and one wedding was modeled after traditional German wedding with appropriate

authentic costumes. However, even as they chose not to follow the "contemporary," traditional white wedding format, their ceremonies all incorporated traditional aspects, such as the repeating of vows and the exchanging of rings. The implication here suggests that even while some couples attempt to assert more creativity in how they conduct their weddings, they still adhere to cultural and social norms, with the result being the transmission of a cultural hegemony via a program such as "A Wedding Story," which finds its basis in reality. Additionally, the majority of weddings incorporated religious aspects, illustrated by the preponderance of weddings conducted in religious locales by ministers, priests, and rabbis, which further endorses traditional practices.

"A Wedding Story," as with its media counterparts, also helps to legitimize the consumption and expense related to today's wedding ceremony and reception by featuring weddings that include and display outward signs of consumerism. This includes attire of the wedding party, transportation, reception site and decorations, elaborate wedding cake, and other expenses implied by images of an extravagant party. For critical scholars, the wedding, with all its accoutrements, poses a real and important problem by epitomizing the detriments of capitalism—the dictating of spending by those who can afford it upon those who cannot. As noted by Currie (1993), couples who pay for their wedding often start their marriage with a financial disadvantage. In addition to resultant debt, the perpetuation and promotion of consumption related to the wedding creates expectations beyond what may be realistic. Many of these expectations are created by the wedding industry (Otnes & Scott, 1996). Indeed, "A Wedding Story," in its coverage of weddings that include such consumerism, can be viewed, in essence, as an extended advertisement for the wedding industry.

Suggestions for Future Research

The wedding and its related conventions embody traditional, patriarchal, and consumer-oriented ideals, ones which endorse and promote women's secondary place in the social system. As with other television programming, "A Wedding Story" cultivates a certain view of the world. It does so in a way that can be considered more valid that other television programs, such as those that are entertainment-oriented and essentially creations of Hollywood script writers, because it is based in reality. However, its producers do exert a gatekeeping function by choosing whose weddings, among those couples who make submissions to the show, to feature. The process by which couples are chosen obviously lends itself to serve as a research path. Included in an analysis of that process would be the criteria by which submissions for inclusion in the show are judged. Do the producers want to feature more traditionally planned weddings? How unusual can a wedding (or couple) be before it is accepted or eliminated as a potential episode? How many submissions are received, and of those, how many are accepted to be covered?

Additionally, the demographic composition of the production staff could be analyzed. For example, what is the sex of the producers, directors, editors, and camera operators? What kinds of views about weddings and marriage do they hold? Answers to these questions would provide further insight into not only the production process of the program, but also the extent to which cultural norms and ideals perpetuate themselves beyond everyday life—as experienced by the actual couples themselves—into the values and attitudes of those in the television industry. The philosophy behind The Learning Channel also could be examined, in terms of the scope of its programming, and the choices made by its programming executives.

"A Wedding Story" on the surface may be construed to be directed toward non-working women, due to the nature of its content and time slot aired; its "mainstream" wedding ideals

contained in most of its episodes may appeal to such an audience. Viewed with the cultivation theory approach, the traditional gender role expectations, patriarchal social system, and artifacts and rituals associated with weddings as portrayed in the program, would be reinforced for heavy viewers.

In that the wedding serves as the culmination of romantic love as perpetuated in the popular media, such as books, films, and television entertainment programs, researchers could also examine how romantic ideals and myths are incorporated into the narrative of "A Wedding Story." For example, couples, separately, relate how they met, fell in love, and the conditions under which the groom-to-be proposed marriage. The inclusion of couples' concepts of love and marriage could be analyzed further to see how and if they contradict with more realistic aspects of their lives, such as the importance of one spouse's career over another's and negotiating how the roles of husband and wife will be played out after the wedding. In several of the episodes, the terms "love at first sight" and "soul mate" were often used when spouses-to-be described their partners. Researchers could investigate how the couple fares after the wedding to see how such notions and ideals survive the realities of the couple's everyday life.

Researchers could further investigate the components of the wedding ceremony itself as depicted in the structured, mediated stories of this and similar wedding-themed programs. The content of wedding vows serves as one area that obviously might incorporate aspects of gender, such as the use of traditional, patriarchal-based language. For example, do vows still include the word "obey"? Along that vein, religious backgrounds of the bride and groom could be studied, with a special emphasis on the extent to which gender roles are based in couples' religious beliefs.

The world depicted in "A Wedding Story" is one of, basically, white people and white weddings—it is a world that to a large degree excludes other races, ethnicities, and sexual

orientations. Obviously, a larger sample of programs would provide a more complete picture of the race of couples featured in the show. However, what must be noted is that, in the sample presented here, there were no couples consisting of a Caucasian and an African-American. Additionally, there were no same-sex ceremonies depicted in this sample. What then results not only points to a social hegemony, but also to a cultivation of the notion that weddings are for white heterosexuals who can afford a large church wedding. In that the ideals that surround marriage and weddings are love and commitment, future researchers, employing a critical approach, could investigate the extent to which, and the reasons why, other "non-mainstream" couples are excluded from this type of program.

Finally, the messages inherent in media portrayals of weddings should be analyzed within a wider communicative milieu—one that includes contradictory messages that promote sexual equality and egalitarianism. For example, media content aimed at career women promote values and ideals that endorse women's independence, both financially and socially. Even as women as a working contingent in American society strive to establish and maintain individuality and independence, they are surrounded by messages that endorse a traditional view of marriage and the wedding ceremony itself.

These contradictions can be studied, in terms of how women cope with pressures dictated by accepted etiquette and cultural expectations. For instance, in several of the episodes studied here, brides-to-be, in their voice-over narratives and conversations with other women, mentioned that they acquiesced to traditional wedding practices because of what the ceremony meant to their fiancés. Future researchers could delve more closely into the ways women resolve such conflicts, and whether they ultimately choose or are influenced to follow tradition, or create alternative rituals and ceremonies to publicly acknowledge their commitment.

Note

[1] In order to obtain a sizeable sample for this analysis, given the high-rotation schedule of episodes during this time period, a total of 77 episodes were recorded at random between the months of April and October, 1998. Of these, 27 were duplicates ("repeats").

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Portrayal of Women Using Computers in Television Commercials:

A Content Analysis

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Abstract

This content analysis examines the representation of male and female characters shown using computers in prime-time television commercials. An analysis of one week's commercials drawn from network and cable programming reveals both positive and negative portrayals of female computer users. While women are shown as computer users almost as frequently as men, they are significantly more likely to be depicted as clerical workers and less likely to be portrayed as business professionals. While previous studies have examined magazine ads for computer products, this study represents the first known examination of commercials for computer products, and thus provides important benchmark data.

Introduction

Scholars of media innovations from the printing press forward have noted that those who control information and have the power to use it enjoy a distinct advantage in society. Over the past two decades, observers of the computer revolution have expressed concerns about issues of access, exclusion, and the creation of a technological underclass. The consequences for those without computer skills include being excluded from high-tech jobs that are among the nation's fastest growing areas of employment (computer scientists, computer engineers and systems analysts, according to a 1998 U.S. Department of Labor report) and stunted advancement in other fields.

Several studies have suggested that technological competence is becoming a gendered attribute, one that is viewed as attractive and important for males to possess, but non-essential and even unattractive for females. In the words of Gill & Grint (1995, p. 8),

> "Masculinity and technology are conceived of as being symbolically intertwined, such that technical competence has come to constitute an integral part of masculine gender identity..."

This assertion is corroborated by studies that document decreased interest in computers by girls at approximately the onset of puberty (Alvarado, 1984), as well as girls' rejection of computers as a means to assert their femininity (Turkle, 1988). Fryer (1994) notes that women often find their technical competence questioned, while men do not. Collins-Jarvis (1993, p. 51) cites ten studies that have found women to be more likely than mailes to hold negative attitudes toward the importance of computing and their own abilities to use computers.

The paucity of women in computer science has been the focus of numerous articles in scholarly and professional journals (Lockheed and Frakt, 1984; McClain, 1983; Strober and Arnold, 1984) and reports by the National Science Foundation (Davis, 1996, NSF 1996) and the American Association of University Women (1998). Recent data suggest that despite widespread adoption of computers in the home and workplace, women continue to be underrepresented both in computer science occupations and the educational pipeline for these careers. A *USA Today* survey found that only 10-30 percent of computer programming, engineering and management jobs at technology companies are filled by women (Crain, 1996). The number of bachelor's degrees awarded to women in computer science from Ph.D. granting universities has eroded since peaking in 1984 at 37.2 percent. By 1996, the number of female computer science graduates reached a 20 year low, at just 16 percent (Furger, 1998, p. 154). A 1997 survey of SAT test takers showed that just 2 percent of females said they intended to major in computer or information science in college (Educational Testing Service, 1997). As Crain (1996, p. 15) notes, "this is a systemic problem that begins in math class and results in women being shut out of one of the fastest growing and lucrative job markets of the future."

Clearly, there are many influences that shape attitudes toward gender roles and technology, including messages from parents, schools, peers, corporate America, and the popular

media culture. The present study focuses on the role of television, and in particular, prime time TV commercials, in fostering stereotypical attitudes related to technology and those who use it. While television commercials certainly are not the only influence on individual attitudes, they are part of the cultural environment that constructs our images of gender roles. The authors recognize that race, gender and class bias are equally important and intermeshed oppressions worthy of study in relation to representations of technology. However, in order to reduce the scope of this study, gender was chosen as the focus for this analysis.

Review of the Literature

Since the 1970s, a growing body of research has consistently supported the contention that television impacts viewers' acceptance of stereotypes and perceptions of appropriate gender roles and occupations. Both Gerbner's (1979, 1980) cultivation theory and Bandura's (1977) social learning theory suggest that viewers learn attitudes, norms and values from television role models. Numerous studies have borne out these theories (Beuf, 1974; Frueh, 1975; Kimball, 1986; Lafky, 1996; McGhee and Freuh, 1980; Shrum, 1995).

TV Commercials as Gender Prescriptions

Television role models appear in commercials as well as programming. Geis et al. (1984) concluded that television commercials function as "achievement scripts" for women. The authors found that viewing sex-stereotyped commercials caused college women to emphasize home-making in descriptions of their long-term aspirations, while women who saw reversed-sex role commercials were more likely to emphasize independence and career-related goals. Tan (1979) provided experimental evidence that sex-stereotyped commercials affect adolescent girls' attitudes toward gender roles.

No previous empirical studies were found that examine the cultivation of gender stereotypes in television ads for computer products. However, several studies of advertisements in popular computer magazines have indicated gender bias. Ware and Stuck (1985) reported that visuals of men in magazine advertisements for computer products outnumbered those of women by two to one. Women in the ads were underrepresented in roles as managers, experts and repair technicians, and over-represented as salespeople, clerical workers and sex objects. Similarly, boys were depicted as learners, game players, repair technicians and buyers, while girls' only identifiable role was as learner. Males were more likely to be shown actively using the computer, rather than passively watching or standing by. Marshall and Bannon (1988) studied the extent of race and sex equity in computer magazines targeted to three distinct audiences: educators, the general computer user, and high-tech-career professionals. They noted that males were depicted in 90 percent of the ads and accounted for 68 percent of the individuals shown. Most females and minorities were tokens "hidden" in groups of white males. More than 70 percent of the ads reflected gender stereotypes, most commonly women in clerical or sex object roles and men in managerial or executive roles. The authors concluded,

> Adults reading these magazines are repeatedly provided the messages that computers are for white males, that females using computers should be in clerical or other subordinate jobs, and that females are sex objects to be used to advertise computer products. Since these messages are being reinforced over and over again, they may become so internalized that they are passed on from adult to adult in general attitudes or even employment and from adult to children in communicating individual expectations. (p. 25)

What is known about television commercials for technology products comes largely from trade publications of the advertising industry. In recent years, the advertising trade press has attempted to send a wake-up call to computer manufacturers, who have focused steadfastly on the male business user as their primary target audience. Despite evidence that women are purchasing computers in growing numbers and use desktop computers at work more than men

(Kaplan, 1994), ad campaigns have been slow to aggressively target female consumers. A survey of 1,500 women reported in *The New York Times* found that 53 percent of female computer users said advertising for computer-related products did not appeal to them because it was aimed at men. Among open-ended comments from respondents: "You never see a computer commercial with a female in it. You always see a man" (Elliott, 1996). *Adweek* (September 25, 1995) reported that computer commercials often depict father-son bonding around the computer, and decried the "father-son combination" as "cliché" in computer commercials. Hinkel (1992, p. 3) noted that the focus on the male consumer is revealed in advertisements in which "women are more likely to be standing in a short skirt next to a computer than they are to be sitting down and using it."

According to one computer industry executive, computer ads need to be more humanistic and not just product-oriented to appeal to women (Kaplan, 1994). In response, some manufacturers have tried to "re-gender" home computers as feminine (Cassidy, 1996, reported in Consalvo, 1997, p. 104). These efforts have included supplementing media buys in computer magazines with ads in *Working Woman* which feature moms and dads and working men and women together (Johnson, 1995). And -- in a burst of gendered "genius" -- making computers with interchangeable colored panels so that women can match their homes' decor (*Home Furnishings Network, 1995).*

The implications of the lack of visibility of female computer users are suggested by Furber (1998, p. 161), who decries "the absence of role models that young women can look to and aspire to be like."

> Put yourself in the position of a young woman in middle school or high school who's just beginning to think seriously about her career choices. She knows women who are teachers, writers, nurses, accountants, salespeople and small business owners. She might even know women who are doctors and lawyers (or at least, she's seen women in these

> positions on TV). But how many girls know women who are engineers, mathematicians, or computer scientists? Not many. Girls need women whom they can look up to and say, "I want to be like her;" women who provide an alternative image to the male hacker or computer nerd. (Furber, 1998, p. 161)

Purpose of the Study

The present study builds on the previous investigations of computer magazine advertising by examining the content of television commercials during prime-time programming to determine how women are portrayed using computer technology. Currently, most ad dollars for computer products are spent in television (LNR/Media Watch, 1998). Additionally, computer magazines are read by a relatively small, and highly-involved segment of the population which is predominately male. For instance, *PC World*'s female readership hovered around 15% from the early 1980s to 1995 (Johnson, 1995). Prime-time television, seen by a larger audience of both men and women, adults and children, is likely to have a more widespread impact on the cultivation of attitudes about computer use.

The purpose of the study is to examine whether television commercials reflect gender biases previously observed in magazine advertising, particularly the underrepresentation of women in computer ads and the portrayal of men and women in stereotypical roles (women as moms and secretaries and men in managerial and executive roles). The central research question is: Do the activities, purposes, level of expertise, and settings differ based on gender in commercials which depict a character using a computer?

Method

Following the cultivation hypothesis, we wished to examine not only commercials selling computer-related products, but commercials for other kinds of products that happened to include visuals of someone using a computer.

Sample

Evening prime time programming and commercial breaks (Monday-Saturday, 8-11 p.m. and Sunday 7-11 p.m.) on ABC, CBS, NBC and FOX were recorded onto videotape during the week of April 26-May 2 in the 1997-98 season. The particular week was chosen because it did not occur during a sweeps week, and there was no special coverage of events such as sports tournaments or awards. For comparison to the networks and because the authors believed they might be a rich source of technology-product commercials, the news-oriented cable channels MSNBC and CNN were also recorded during prime time hours of the same week. This procedure yielded 3,183 separate commercials, excluding station promos and ads for locally-owned businesses.

A total of 351 commercials showed people using computers. Commercials that aired multiple times during the sample period were coded for content by each coder only once, but all of these ads ($n = 351$) were included in the analysis. This represents the total number of impressions of persons using computers in commercials that a television viewer would see. Of these, 175 were for computer-related technology products (defined as computer hardware, software, computer fax/modems, Internet service providers, scanners, other computer accessory or service. (Three corporate ID spots from computer companies which showed no products were aired, but not included in the sample since they did not show a person using a computer.) The majority of the ads ($n = 229$) showing people using computers were for products other than computers. For instance, a commercial for Century 21 Real Estate showed a family looking for a house on-line, a commercial for Advil showed a person at a keyboard, and a number of commercials showed telemarketing or customer service reps standing by to take customer calls. Many ads used computers as a prop, possibly making an association between a product and being

on the leading edge of technology, but the ads were not included in the sample if they did not show a person actively using the computer.

Procedure

Four independent coders were used to code the commercials. Three were graduate students and one was a colleague not otherwise involved in the study. In an initial training session, the coders were given oral and written instructions, including examples of coding definitions, and participated in practice coding and discussion. Videotapes of network news (not part of the sample) were used in the training session so that coders could learn to use the code sheet to code actual commercials. They were permitted to pause, rewind and replay the videotaped commercials as often as necessary to complete the coding. After the training session, the code sheet was modified slightly for ease of use and to add "healthcare" as an additional product category.

Each commercial was then coded by two coders. The coders were not informed about the authors' specific research questions and worked independently. Following standard content analysis procedures (Holsti, 1969, Kassarjian, 1977), a multi-step coding process was used to code the ads. A subsample of 40 commercials (11.4% of the total) was selected for purposes of determining inter-coder reliability, which was computed using percentage of agreement (Kassarjian, 1977). Inter-coder reliability scores for the subsample ranging from 88 to 97 percent were achieved on all but two items. Coders found it difficult to differentiate between variable categories in these two items (i.e., whether a computer user was "competent" or "expert" or whether a character was in his or her 20s or 30s). These categories were collapsed, and instructions to coders were clarified to address items where disagreements had occurred.

Other disagreements between coders were resolved by a third coder who did not originally code the commercial.

Coding Categories

The coding instrument contained a variety of measures that provided a detailed examination of the roles and activities of all characters using computer technology. Coding categories were based on variables identified by previous scholars, with modifications specific to the technology focus of this study. Identifying variables, such as the corporate sponsor and time and station of airing, were also recorded. The products and services presented by the ads were classified into ten categories: computer hardware/software/ Internet provider, communications, food product or restaurant, automobile/automotive, cosmetic/hygiene, retail store, household product, business/financial/professional service, health/medical, and other.

Voice-over. Voice-over was defined as narration by an announcer. The gender of narrators is considered important to this study because it has consistently been identified as an area of gender bias in television commercials. Bretl and Cantor (1988, p. 605) list ten previous studies which focused on the gender of voice-overs. These studies have consistently found that women's voices are underrepresented. Subsequent studies reveal that male narration continues to be used in approximately 90 percent of television commercials (Merlo and Smith, 1988; Lovdal, 1989; Craig, 1992). Predominant usage of male narrators implies that females are not as knowledgeable as males and that "men know best" (Griffith, 1996, p. 3), and that males are the "voice of authority" for both sexes, often giving "the final word" (Mareck et al., 1978).

Character demographics. To determine who populates commercials for computer technologies, the apparent gender, race, and age ranges of all human characters shown in each ad were recorded. This included both characters who were using technology and those who were

not, and excepted only out-of-focus background figures and crowd scenes (i.e., stadium scenes). Data analysis permitted the comparison of the demographics of those shown using computers to the demographics of all characters shown in the ad.

Roles of technology users. The occupational and or domestic roles of characters shown using technology, where discernable, were coded into categories that expanded on those employed by Bretl and Cantor (1988), Ware and Stuck (1980) and Marshall and Bannon (1988). These roles included: executive/business professional, computer expert, clerical, doctor/scientist/researcher, nurse/medical technician, blue-collar worker other than secretary, teacher, student, child, athlete/celebrity, husband or male relative, wife or female relative, or undeterminable. Previous studies have consistently shown women are underrepresented in high status positions. For instance, as recently as 1992, Craig (1992) found prime-time commercials depicted women in positions of authority outside the home just 12.4 percent of the time. This leads to the hypothesis:

H_1 Women will be likely to be depicted in stereotypical roles, i.e. as clerical workers and in family roles.

Activities and purposes of technology users. In order to determine if there were differences in the depictions of how men and women used technology, all characters shown using technology were categorized by their activities and purposes. Activities were classified into one of five categories: active use of technology (sitting at a keyboard, handling equipment, viewing output); observing another person using computer technology; consulting or assisting another using technology; asking others about technology; or talking about technology. The purposes of technology use were classified into ten different categories: using the Internet to "surf" or search for information; organizing the household, shopping, communicating with loved

ones, routine business (e-mail, scheduling), chatting in chat rooms, game-playing, advanced applications (i.e., animation, 3-D imaging, statistical analysis), audience member for computer presentation/output, and other. Based on the review of literature, we hypothesized:

H_2 Women will be less likely than men to be shown actively using a computer.

H_3 Women will be depicted using computers for maintaining relationships, organizing the household and buying things.

Level of expertise. Where apparent, the level of expertise, displayed by characters shown using technology was coded as expert/competent (a person who has advanced skills and knowledge, teaches others, or uses technology without difficulty), novice (a person learning technology who may need help), or frustrated (lack of mastery causes frustration/fearful technophobes). McArthur and Resko (1975) found that male characters in commercials were portrayed as expert authorities 70 percent of the time, while female characters were portrayed as mere product "users," and expert authorities just 14 percent of the time. This prompted the next hypothesis.

H_4 Men will be more often be depicted as competent experts in terms of computer use.

Setting. The social setting – whether characters used technology alone or in a group -- and locations in which central characters appeared were coded. Setting is considered an important variable because of previous research that indicates that women and girls are disproportionately likely to be found in the home, particularly in kitchen and bathroom settings, while men and boys are shown outdoors or in fantasy settings (Bretl and Cantor, 1988; Busby, 1975; Courtenay and Whipple, 1974; Dominick and Rauch, 1972; Smith, 1994). Additionally, Furger (1998) laments that parents often place computers in "male" domains – the boy's bedroom or the father's den, rather than gender-neutral locations. Fifteen distinct locations were

itemized under the categories of "workplace," "home" and "outdoors." These variables will be considered in the final hypotheses.

H_5 Women will be more likely to use computers in group settings.

H_6 Women will be more likely be shown using computers in the home.

H_7 Computers use will occur in "male domains", i.e. a den or boy's room.

Data Analysis

The SPSS statistical package was used to analyze the data. Data were sorted by gender and a split run analysis performed to yield separate data sets for males and females. A Pearson chi-square analysis was used to determine whether there were significant differences among males and females for each variable with a sufficient cell count.

Findings

Less than 10 percent of weekly prime time commercials, including multiple airings of the same ad, depicted people using computers. Sixty-nine percent (n = 243) of the commercials showing computer use were carried by CNN and MSNBC. Considering only the ads that depicted computer use, 35 percent were for computer products and services. The remaining ads were for product categories unrelated to computer sales, the largest categories being telecommunication (telephone services including wireless communication, 15 percent), and business and financial services (13 percent). Health-related product ads accounted for 8 percent of the ads, and retailers accounted for 6 percent, most of which showed telemarketers or customer service representatives (young females) in front of computers. The remaining ads represented the automobile, food, cosmetic and "other" industry categories.

Narration

Narrators of the ads in the sample were overwhelmingly male. Less than 20 percent of the ads were narrated by a female alone. This finding is consistent with previous studies of all

types of television commercials which show that male narration is used in about 90 percent of all television commercials.

Ad Population

Demographics of all people depicted in the commercials reveal an ad world that is 60 percent male, 40 percent female, and 80 percent white. Compared to actual U.S. population figures, males in these ads are over-represented by about 10 percent and whites by 6 percent. (Whites make up 74 percent of the population according to the 1990 Census.) Thirteen percent of the ad population was African-American, slightly more than the 11 percent Census figure. Asians, however, comprised 6 percent of the ad population, double their actual representation in the U. S. population. Hispanics, 8 percent of the population in real life, were dramatically under-represented, identifiable to coders less than one percent of the time (.6%) in the commercials studied.

Gender, Age, and Race of Computer Users

A look at just those characters shown using computers showed 50 percent of the 751 computer users were men, while 46 percent were women (4 percent were undeterminable). This finding marks a substantial increase in the sheer presence of women when compared to Ware and Stuck's (1985) study of magazine advertisements which found men outnumbered women two to one. However, children and teenagers using computers were almost twice as likely to be boys (24 males vs. 14 girls). While computer users were depicted most often as young – 70 percent of the men and 82 percent of women were judged to be in their 20s and 30s -- after the age of 40, female characters began to disappear. Nearly one-quarter of the male characters were 40 or older (22 percent), but only 13 percent of female characters were appeared to be over 40.

The racial distribution of persons shown using computers was similar to the characteristics of the overall population of the ads. Whites accounted for 80.8 percent of the computer users, African-Americans accounted for 14.4 percent, and Asians were 4.7 percent. It is interesting to note there were *no* characters identified as Hispanic using computers. When broken down by race and gender, white men outnumbered white women by 16 percent, but African-American and Asian women outnumbered men of the same race, by 40 percent and 166 percent, respectively.

Occupational Roles by Gender

H_1 Women will be likely to be depicted in stereotypical roles, i.e. as clerical workers and in family rather than workplace roles.

A chi-square analysis of all occupational roles by gender ($\chi^2(7) = 58.88$, $p<.000$) indicated that women were significantly more likely to be portrayed in several roles, including clerical and family roles. Indeed the highest adjusted residual (5.7) was found in the secretary/receptionist/telemarketer cell. Women were also significantly more likely to be cast as female relations than men were to be cast as male relations. However, compared to men, women were significantly less likely to be portrayed as business professionals, as students, and as computer experts. There was no significant difference in portrayal as doctors/scientists or as blue collar workers, but both of these occupations had fewer numbers than most other categories. A few occupational roles (celebrity/athlete, teacher, nurse/medical technician) were dropped because of low cell numbers. Persons coded as "other occupation" or "can't determine" were dropped from the analysis.

Activities and Purposes

H_2 Women will be less likely than men to be shown actively using a computer.

Even though 324 men were shown actively using a computer while only 261 women were shown as active users, there was no statistical support for the second hypothesis (χ^2 (4) = 3.28 p<.512). Only 54 people were coded as observing computer use, also with no statistical difference between men and women. Similarly, no statistically significant differences were found in the number of men and women shown asking for computer assistance, giving computer-related advice, or talking about technology.

H_3 Women will be depicted using computers for organizing the household and buying things.

It was hypothesized that the purposes of computer use of women would fall into stereotypical uses designed to facilitate "relationship building," shopping, or maintaining household order. However, the purpose of a character's computer use was often difficult to determine, in large part because of many ads which appeared as a fast-paced collage of quick cuts and multiple scenes. In addition, in many ads, the angle of filming did not permit a view of the computer screen to determine how it was being used; not could purpose of use be determined from contextual clues. Twenty-seven percent of the activities were coded as "indeterminable" and dropped from the analysis.

The code sheet provided ten categories to code the purpose of the computer use. However, most of the categories had too small a cell size to permit tests for significance. Among the categories dropped were what the researchers considered to be the most stereotypical roles: organizing the household (no people coded) and buying things (six people coded). Categories with sufficient cell counts to be used in the analysis were surfing the net, routine business, games, and advanced programs. Statistical significance (χ^2 (3) = 33.99, p<.000) was found for all categories except advanced programs. Men were significantly more likely than women to be

depicted playing games and surfing the net. Women were significantly more likely than men to be shown using the computer for routine business.

Gender Differences in Expertise

H_4 Men will be more often be depicted as competent in terms of their computer skills.

This hypothesis was not supported. Women were significantly more likely than men to be depicted as competent computer users (χ^2 (2) = 17.48, p<.000). It should be noted that skill in computer use is not necessarily confined to characters depicted as high-level computer experts. Telemarketers and secretaries who were predominately women often appeared to coders to be very competent in using their computers.

Social Settings and Location of Computers

H_5 Women will use computers in group settings.

There was no statistical support (χ^2 (1) = .038, p<.845) for this hypothesis. Men and women were equally likely to be shown using a computer alone or with others. Female computer users were nearly equally divided on this dimension -- 152 women were using a computer alone and 155 were depicted using it with one or more other persons.

H_6 Women will be more likely than men to be shown using computers in the home.

This hypothesis was not supported. The majority of the sample, both men and women, was shown using computers at a place of business. Among those shown in the workplace, there was an almost even split of men (55%) and women (45%), which parallels the gender split in the sample. However, this finding is understandable since so many women were depicted as secretaries/receptionists/telemarketers, and therefore shown in the workplace. Men were as likely to be shown using a computer in a home setting (10.5%) as were women (10%).

There were only seven people in the sample shown using a computer outdoors. All seven were shown using their computer in an airplane or car. All seven were men.

H_7 Computer use will occur in "male domains", i.e. a den or boy's room.

The coders noted which room inside the home that computer use occurred. The categories were kitchen, home office, den/family room, adult bedroom, boy's bedroom, girl's bedroom, patio/porch, and other. There were no computers shown in an adult's bedroom or a girl's bedroom; too few were coded as home office or porch/patio to include in the analysis.

Most computer use occurred in the den/family room or a boy's bedroom and males were significantly more likely to be the computer user (χ^2 (2) = 14.71, p<.001). Interestingly, there was no difference found in the kitchen or home office, where cells were quite small.

Discussion

Our findings suggest that prime-time television commercials offer a mixed bag of images related to gender and computer use. These images reflect the growing presence of women in the workforce, yet subtly underscore gendered norms for computing behavior.

On the positive side, it is clear that television advertisers in the late 1990s are presenting a more positive depiction of women and technology than was revealed in the earlier studies of computer magazines. The quantitative presence of women, shown as nearly half of all computer users, suggests progress, even considering that women were disproportionately cast in clerical roles. Statistically, women were as likely as men to be shown actively using a computer, rather than passively observing (although again, some of this active use was related to low-status clerical roles). Women were as likely as men to be shown using a computer in the workplace, and were statistically more likely than men to be shown as having competent computer skills.

Other noteworthy positive findings were that women were not depicted as using computers for stereotypical activities centered on shopping, the home or relationship-building. They were as likely as men to be shown using the computer alone. These findings suggest that television commercials can not be held responsible for cultivating perceptions of women as infrequent or inept computer users.

These encouraging findings are mitigated, however, by other results consistent with gender stereotypes reported in the literature. In the ad world, female computer users are young adults, rarely over 40, and girls are seen much less frequently than boys. Women are significantly more likely than men to be shown in non-professional occupations, particularly that of secretary or telemarketer. The fact that women were significantly less likely to be shown using computers to play games or surf the net, while significantly more likely to use the computer for routine business, suggests some negative implications. First, game-playing and surfing activities imply that men use computers for recreational purposes – computers are fun and enjoyable. Women, on the other hand, do not use computers for fun, but only as necessary to perform their jobs (an impression congruent with roles as secretaries). Men's activities thus are not only more diverse, but seemingly more pleasant and enjoyable.

Another result worthy of explication is the finding that while white men outnumber white women, African-American and Asian women substantially outnumber men of the same race. Such patterns suggest several explanations: 1) that those groups which historically have posed a threat to a white male patriarchy may be deemphasized in messages that must appeal to white males; 2) the perception of ad creators that men of color are less "believable" as computer users; and 3) the desire to represent both gender and racial diversity by using a single token character, the minority female.

The danger of these negative findings is that television viewers will internalize the implied assumptions about women's relationship with technology. If the media lack depictions of women's authority and enthusiasm for technology, young girls may make career decisions, and parents may steer their daughters, into the more traditional occupational roles which predominate in television's socially constructed reality. Additional research might investigate the cultivation process by showing stereotypic and non-stereotypic commercials depicting computer use to school-aged children and then asking about career preferences and perceived abilities of men and women.

While coders in the current study did not record data about computer use in the prime time programs in which these commercials appeared, they noted anecdotally that depictions of computer use in these programs appeared to be few and far between. Thus, from a cultivation standpoint, no counter-images are present in the programming which might counterbalance the impressions given by the commercials.

In an effort to connect with viewers' experiences, advertisers construct commercials that reinforce and "fit" with conventional gender expectations rather than challenge gender stereotypes. According to the Statistical Abstract of the United States (No. 645, 1996) and reflected in the present study, 97.4 percent of secretaries -- most of whom, we surmise, use computers -- are women. However, according to the same data, 43.8 percent of executive, administrative and managerial professionals in the "real world" are women. Advertising depictions lag behind the growing numbers of women in positions of status and responsibility which were previously considered to be non-traditional roles.

Commercials, constructed to depict scenarios that are both ideal and believable, are likely to cultivate acceptance of those stereotypes that are consistently depicted. Repetition of the

messages under these low-involvement viewing situations (Krugman, 1977; Shrum, 1995) are likely to cultivate attitudes and values about women's use of the computer, much more so than computer magazines with a narrower, more highly involved predominantly male audience.

The issue of exclusion and of technological "haves" and "have-nots" has been paramount since the advent of the computer revolution. Through their portrayal of women using computers, advertisers have an opportunity to help ensure that women are not perceived to be excluded from technology use, while at the same time have greater sales appeal to an important and growing market segment.

The current study serves as a benchmark for future researchers who wish to track the progress of women in television imagery. Existing gender disparities can be improved by depicting more female professionals using technology, especially girls and women over 40; casting fewer women in clerical and female-relation-only roles, and engaging in use of the computer for recreation through game playing and exploring the Web.

As a postscript to this research, it must be noted that the big losers in television commercial portrayal of computer use were African-American men and Hispanics of both genders. Black women were slightly over-represented in the sample when compared to the general population while black men were underrepresented. Whatever the reason, the result is to help further perpetuate the myth of black men as marginal to the white business world. According to U. S. Labor statistics, 3.4 percent of computer experts are Hispanic, as are 7 percent of secretaries and receptionists and 8 percent of communications equipment operators (Statistical Abstract of the United States, no. 645, 1996). However, in this study there were no Hispanics shown using computers. Future research will examine race issues.

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